METRO / A17

Doc may face charges: She put adult diaper on mother in labor, suffocating baby

WORLD / A19

Israeli air raid kills 4 UN observers; Hezbollah vows more rocket attacks

NEWS / A16

Names of OFW arrivals from Lebanon as of Tuesday also at www.inq7.net/lebanon list/

ENTERTAINMENT / A2-1

Palace sacks Transco chief amid talk Aboitiz group asked for it

More people now back Cha-cha, says survey

By Christine O. Avendaño

MALACAÑANG EXPRESSED ELATION YESTERday over results of the Pulse Asia survey this month that found that 40 percent of Filipinos favored changing the Constitution at this time, while 38 percent were against it. Twenty percent were undecided.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita told re

MORE PEOPLE/ A7

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Thursday, July 27, 2006 ★★ 4 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 229 P18 website: www.inq7.net

Fil-Am 'Pea' buckles up with Pinoy pride

By Nikko Dizon

PINOY NA PINOY!

A PHILIPPINE FLAG adorns the belt of Black Eyed Pea Allen Pineda, a.k.a. Apl.de.ap.

"A DJ friend, Rocky Rock, got it for me in LA," a smiling Pineda told the

FIL-AM/ A8

War tearing Fil-Lebanese families apart

By Nikko Dizon

THE WAR IN LEBANON HAS literally torn Filipino-Lebanese families apart.

Among the second batch of returnees who arrived late Tuesday night at the Villamor Air Base in Pasay City on a chartered flight from Damascus, Syria, were members of Filipino-Lebanese families grieving over the forced separation.

At the mention of her husband Abbas Zreik, Miriam Martinez's tears started to flow.

"He told me we should save the children first," Martinez, 45, told the INQUIRER in between sobs.

Zreik, 42, works as a baker. He earlier evacuated his family from their home near southern Lebanon, where the fighting was concentrated, to stay with his parents.

But later he decided that it would be much safer for their two sons, aged 9 and 7, to flee to the Philippines with their mother.

The family took advantage of the evacuation being carried out by the Philippine Embassy in Beirut.

"I'm really worried for his safety," said Martinez, a domestic helper who has lived in Lebanon for the last 13 years. "I will call him up all the time."

Anthony Baluz, 18, arrived with his brothers Samir, 19, and Ronald, 16.

Their father George, a Lebanese salesman in Beirut, chose to stay behind.

"My parents decided that my brothers and I should come here. All my father's goods are stuck in the port. We'll just keep on calling him to make sure that

WAR TEARING/ A8

HOME AWAY FROM HOME: The Baluz brothers from left Ronald, Anthony and Samir trace how far they had had to run to keep out of harm's way. Dual Lebanese-Filipino citizens, the brothers fled to Davao City, where their Filipina mother went on vacation; their salesman father is still in Beirut.

LYN RILLON

VIP WELCOME FOR TODAY'S HEROES: No matter the lateness of the hour on a storm-swept Tuesday night, President Arroyo personally welcomes the second batch of Filipino overseas workers numbering 225. They arrived at the Villamor Air Base aboard a chartered flight from Damascus, Syria, after a 17-hour flight. Miaa General Manager Alfonso Cusi (at left) takes a photo of an OFW posing with Ms Arroyo.

UN group to pay for 450 OFWs' return next week

By Volt Contreras and Jerome Aning

THE SINGLE BIGGEST BATCH OF FILipinos fleeing war-battered Lebanon is arriving in Manila next week, on a flight courtesy of a United Nations-affiliated agency that has responded to the government's appeal for assistance.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) will help send home up to 450 overseas Filipino workers on a chartered Boeing 747 leaving Damascus, Syria, on Aug. 1, the Department of Foreign Affairs said yesterday.

The IOM will also shoulder the OFWs' initial trips by bus from Beirut to Damascus, as well as provide them temporary shelter while awaiting departure in the Syrian capital. The agency has arranged two road trips on July 29 and 30, the DFA reported.

It was not clear if there would be a second IOM-sponsored airlift, but DFA spokesperson Bert Asuque said the repatriation of OFWs from the troubled Middle East country would continue either on government-chartered or commercial flights.

Two more planes carrying evacuees were due to land at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport yesterday: a Cathay Pacific flight carrying 37 Filipinos which arrived at around noon, and a Philippine Airlines flight with 80 evacuees set for an 8 p.m. landing.

UN GROUP/ A8

2 int'l groups hit GMA rights record, probers

By Norman Bordadora

THE ADMINISTRATION OF PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo has to take concrete steps to protect witnesses if the public is to take seriously her condemnation of political killings under her watch, Amnesty International (AI) said yesterday.

While Ms Arroyo called on witnesses to come forward to help solve the killings during her State of the Nation Address on Monday, the administration should back this call with action, the human rights watchdog group said in a statement.

As it is, a team of Dutch and Belgian judges and lawyers that recently looked into the unsolved killing of legal professionals in the Philippines since 2001 has concluded that "the unconstitutional state does not function properly."

That, or "there are powers undermining its proper functions," the International Fact-Finding Mission (IFFM) said in another statement issued from the Netherlands.

2 INT'L/ A7

Estrada: I got documents from Aragoncillo, not from Aquino

By Armand N. Nocum
and Christine O. Avendaño

OUSTED PRESIDENT JOSEPH ESTRADA yesterday said he did not receive classified documents from former Philippine National Police officer Michael Ray Aquino who pleaded guilty in New Jersey on Monday to charges of unauthorized possession of US intelligence reports.

Calling the INQUIRER from his rest house in Tanay, Rizal, Estrada lashed out at Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez for saying that Aquino's guilty plea was a ploy to shield Estrada, Sen. Panfilo Lacson and other opposition leaders, who received classified documents from Aquino from being charged with espionage.

"How could I be saved by him when he does not send me anything. Not even one letter," said Estrada, who is detained in his rest house on charges of plunder and graft.

He admitted, though, that after US authorities arrested Aquino on charges of unauthorized possession of US defense documents, Aquino's relative went to him "asking for help with a deposition that we have never contacted each other."

"I signed the deposition stating that we have not seen each other, and that we have not contacted each other since I

ESTRADA/ A15

Bolante's asylum bid puts him beyond reach of RP law

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.,
Philip Tubeza and TJ Burgonio

THE TRUTH WOULD "REMAIN buried" for the next five years.

That was the reaction of former Solicitor General Francisco Chavez to the application for political asylum in the United States by former Agriculture Undersecretary Jocelyn "Joc-joc" Bolante.

Chavez, who first exposed the P728-fertilizer fund scam, said that even if Bolante's asylum request was eventually denied, the application process in the US could last for five years and Bolante could not be brought back while it is ongoing.

He said the INQUIRER report yesterday confirmed his worst fears that Bolante would use his asylum application to remain in the US and avoid returning to the country to face the Senate inquiry into the fertilizer fund scam.

Bolante had claimed in the INQUIRER report that he was the target of the New People's Army. Yesterday, Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal, spokesperson of the Communist Party of the Philippines, said Bolante's allegation was a ploy to make him eligible for political asylum in the US so he could

BOLANTE'S/ A15

UP engineers' landfill is a dream dump

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

A SHOWCASE of waste management and handling is opening soon on 75 ha in Sitio Tiakad, Barangay San Mateo, Norzagaray, Bulacan, complete with garbage trucks in living color and color-coded uniforms for the personnel.

By Gerry Lirio

IT WILL BE A DREAM DUMP.

Garbage collectors and segregators, and even trucks and drivers will be there in bright, color-coded uniforms—blue shirts for those who want to get plastic wastes, red for those interested in paper, and green for those looking for broken glass, metals, wiring and other trash.

This is how a group of young engineers from the University of the Philippines at Los Baños (UPLB) envisions a P55-million sanitary landfill project in a 75-hectare mountainous property in Norzagaray, Bulacan, in the

UP ENGINEERS'/ A15

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Western sections of Northern and Central Luzon will experience occasional rains. The rest of the country will have mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY KATE PEDROSO, PDI RESEARCH/07/26/06

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

Palace sacks Transco head; reason still a mystery

MALACAÑANG HAS FIRED NATIONAL Transmission Co. president Alan T.Ortiz amid speculation that the Aboitiz group of companies, a known backer of President Macapagal-Arroyo, had demanded for his head.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita confirmed that he has already drafted the termination paper of Ortiz but he was unsure if the President had already signed it. "There is a plan to do that (replace Ortiz)," said Ermita who could not cite a specific reason for kicking Ortiz out of office.

The business community has been rife with talk that the Aboitiz group, one of the oldest and biggest players in the power industry specifically in central and southern Philippines, had sought for Ortiz's replacement after Transco approved the 200-megawatt plant of Korea Electric Power Corp. and Salcon Power Corp. in Naga, Cebu.

Ermita denied that the President was pressured to relieve Ortiz and dismissed the rumors on the Aboitiz group. He stressed that the President was not in the habit of calling a meeting and discussing whether a government official should be replaced.

"There are many reasons for replacing people in government and I would not want to wish to venture what is the reason. I happen to know him. He is a doctor, a PhD, a capable officer. There's got to be reason but I don't think it's dissatisfaction on the part of the President," Ermita said. "All appointees are subject to the President's desires and she has her own criteria. That is her prerogative."

Ermita said that once he gets Ortiz's formal termination, he would immediately announce his replacement.

Casiño held

BAYAN MUNA REPRESENTATIVE TEODORO "Teddy" Casiño was held for almost an hour at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) as immigration officials verified with their higher ups if he could leave for Bangkok, Thailand where he was invited to attend a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) forum.

Casiño was on the Bureau of Immigration's watchlist after the government accused him of committing rebellion along with five other militant congressmen following the failed coup last February.

Casiño's colleague, Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo, was also held by the DOJ and BI before he was allowed to leave for Switzerland last month.

Casiño and his lawyer, Neri Colmenares, also declined to issue an undertaking stating that the congressman would return to the Philippines after the four-day forum that starts today.

The Justice Department and BI asked for Casiño's undertaking despite a travel order issued by Makati City Regional Trial Court Judge Elmo Alameda. He refused.

BILLION PESO ACCOUNT. President Macapagal-Arroyo watches yesterday's signing ceremony of the P1 billion Millennium Challenge Account grant to strengthen the country's anti-corruption campaign. Signing the document in Malacañang are US Ambassador Kristie Kenney (center), Charles Sethness, vice president for accountability of the Millennium Challenge Corp., and Finance Secretary Margarito Teves (right).

P2B to fight corruption

THE GOVERNMENT'S WAR AGAINST CORRUPTION got a billion-peso boost yesterday when the Philippines signed an agreement with the United States for P1 billion in aid to be used in curbing bureaucratic corruption.

The $25 million grant (P1 billion) was approved and announced early last month by the US under the congressionally funded $1.5-billion Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) program to reward countries that govern well.

The President last month put up a P1 billion counterpart fund to the US grant, boosting the government's anti-corruption war chest to P2 billion.

President Macapagal-Arroyo witnessed the signing of the grant agreement in Malacañang yesterday by Philippine officials led by Finance Secretary Margarito Teves and US Ambassador Kristie Kenney and officials of the Millennium Challenge Corp., the US federal agency that administers the MCA program.

Fighting graft

The P1 billion two-year Philippine initiative, to be run by the US Agency for International Development, will strengthen the Office of the Ombudsman, the special prosecutor for corruption cases involving government officials and the Department of Finance antigraft programs in the customs and internal revenue bureaus.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said that this showed the "determined effort of the administration under President Arroyo to really fight graft and corruption."

Teves told reporters that the money will not only go into strengthening the Office of the Ombudsman and the Department of Finance but "part of it will go to antigraft (programs)."

The DOF has three anti-corruption programs in the Bureau of Customs and Bureau of Internal Revenue—the Revenue Integrity Protection Service (RIPS), Run After Tax Evaders (RATE), and the Run after the Smugglers (RATS).

Teves said he and Kenney agreed the two governments needed to work closely in the implementation of the program.

"Because we both want to succeed in what they have provided us so that we have better chances of moving to next level," Teves told reporters.

First things first

"I understand that the next level will be quite significant in terms of amount. They are talking roughly of something like $200 million or thereabouts. So first things first, we have to do well with what we already have," he said.

The MCA is an international aid program created by US President George Bush at the turn of the millennium to "reward countries that govern well."

The MCA, according to the US government, is given to poor countries that are "ruling justly," "investing in their people," and "encouraging economic freedom."

So far only a few countries have qualified for the MCA grants.

The Philippines failed to make the list of qualified countries because of its under-performance in fighting corruption and easing its fiscal woes.

But it was placed on "threshold status," making it eligible to seek US grants to help it improve on its areas of weaknesses.

A country under the threshold status is one that does not qualify for the MCA but may eventually qualify if appropriate policy reforms are implemented.

The P1 billion grant is intended to help the Philippines finally qualify for the MCA.

Monitoring

Kenney said the USAID which will take charge of monitoring the program's implementation would be working closely with Teves and his DOF team.

"The key is to monitor every step of this make sure it go to just where it needs to go to and it is done right," she said.

"We want to treat each other as serious adult partners but obviously the extent by which it can be implemented reflects on the credibility of the Philippines and the eligibility for additional funds," Kenney said.

The US government, she said, will be "watching that (implementation) carefully."

Kenney said it was "terrific" that the government was willing to commit more funds to the anticorruption campaign, noting the P1-billion counterpart fund put up by the Arroyo administration.

"This is an important issue. It is important that people in the Philippines get a sense of money coming back into the important social services, education and health," she added.

The biggest chunk

The biggest chunk of the P1-billion grant will go to the RATE program which will get P489 million.

The Office of the Ombudsman will get P338 million for the training of employees, the establishment of an information management system, and enhancement of its investigation and surveillance capability.

The RATS and RIPS programs will get P161 million and P73 million, respectively, while P13 million will go to the monitoring and evaluation of the program.

Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez said the funds would help her office to hire more lawyers to assist in the investigation and prosecution of cases against corrupt officials.

"If we have more investigators, we will have more cases filed. If we have good prosecutors, then we'll have more convictions so that would mean a lot to them because they'll see we're doing our job to address corruption," Gutierrez told reporters.

"At the same time, we'll continuously implement our projects with non-governmental organizations, civil society and other funders on corruption prevention projects." *Christine Avendaño*

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Counting machines work, says Palace

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

MALACAÑANG YESTERDAY SAID THAT TAPping the idled counting machines of the Mega Pacific consortium was the most "practical" way to fulfill President Macapagal-Arroyo's objective of computerizing next year's elections.

"In case there is a resolution by the appropriate court, and in this case the Office of the Ombudsman, then that could be very well be used. The units are already there," said Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita.

"I'm saying 'in case' because we still don't know what will happen in the Ombudsman's Office," he said.

The Mega Pacific consortium won the Commission on Elections bidding for automating the 2004 polls but the Supreme Court voided the deal. But by then the consortium had already delivered 1,991 counting machines and received the bulk of the P1.25 billion contract price.

Ermita explained that the ongoing Ombudsman probe into the Mega Pacific contract was not only meant to determine the criminal liability of the Comelec officials and private individuals involved in the deal, as ordered by the high court, but also to decide whether the idled counting machines in the Comelec's warehouse could be legally used by the government.

"So much will depend on that hearing of the Ombudsman. What's being determined in the hearing is whether the machines available now that has been sequestered by the Supreme Court order are still usable or not," he said.

Ermita said the automation of the 2007 elections was on the President's 10-point agenda, reiterated in her recent State of the Nation Address.

The President's election lawyer, Romulo Macalintal, cited the urgency in resolving issue of using the Mega Pacific computers in the 2007 elections.

"All computer equipment should be in place in time because if we don't start now we can kiss computerized polls in 2007 goodbye. We have to do this because our voting system is too primitive. If we don't do it now, when are we going to do it?" Macalintal said.

Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor said the recent testimony of the Department of Science and Technology at the Ombudsman hearing—reiterating its previous finding that the Mega Pacific computers were fully accurate—has made it feasible for the government to use the counting machines in the 2007 elections.

SC clears former DBP execs

THE SUPREME COURT HAS CLEARED A group of former Development Bank of the Philippines officials and several officers of a mining firm of graft charges involving an alleged P1.3-billion behest loan.

In a July 25 decision, released yesterday, the high court upheld the Feb. 22, 1999 resolution of then Ombudsman Aniano Desierto dismissing the graft charges against the DBP officials and officers of Sabena Mining Corp. (Sabemcor) identified as Recio Garcia, Don Ferry, Joseph Chua, Jaime Laya, Rafael Atayde, Andres Cheng and Edgar Rodriguez.

The decision did not specify which of these individuals were the public officials and which ones the private respondents.

In a decision penned by Associate Justice Adolfo Azcuna, the court said that contrary to the Presidential Commission on Good Government's allegation, the loan granted to Sabemcor was sufficiently supported by collateral.

It said the PCGG failed to present sufficient evidence to prove its allegation that the loan was undercapitalized. *Armand N. Nocum*

Romulo won't press Suu Kyi meeting in Burma

KUALA LUMPUR—Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo said Wednesday that he would visit military-ruled Burma (Myanmar) sometime next month but would not try to meet with detained pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

Romulo said he has accepted an invitation from Burma's military junta for him to visit as a Philippine envoy "sometime in August," but specific dates and details were still being worked out.

Romulo, who was attending a conference of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, told reporters that he would not insist on meeting Suu Kyi, who has spent 11 of the past 17 years under house arrest at the hands of the ruling junta.

Broken promises

"There are no preconditions in our acceptance of the invitation," he said.

Burma has become a source of embarrassment to the 10-member ASEAN, largely because the government has failure to fulfill promises to restore democracy and free political prisoners, including Suu Kyi.

ASEAN foreign ministers this week pressed Myanmar to show "tangible progress" on democratic reforms and sought the release of political detainees in a joint statement on Tuesday.

Malaysian Foreign Minister Syed Hamid Albar made a fact-finding visit to Myanmar last March as an ASEAN envoy, but he was not allowed to meet Nobel laureate Suu Kyi and other members of her National League for Democracy party.

Romulo has indicated that he may raise the issue of political reforms to leaders of Myanmar's junta during his visit.

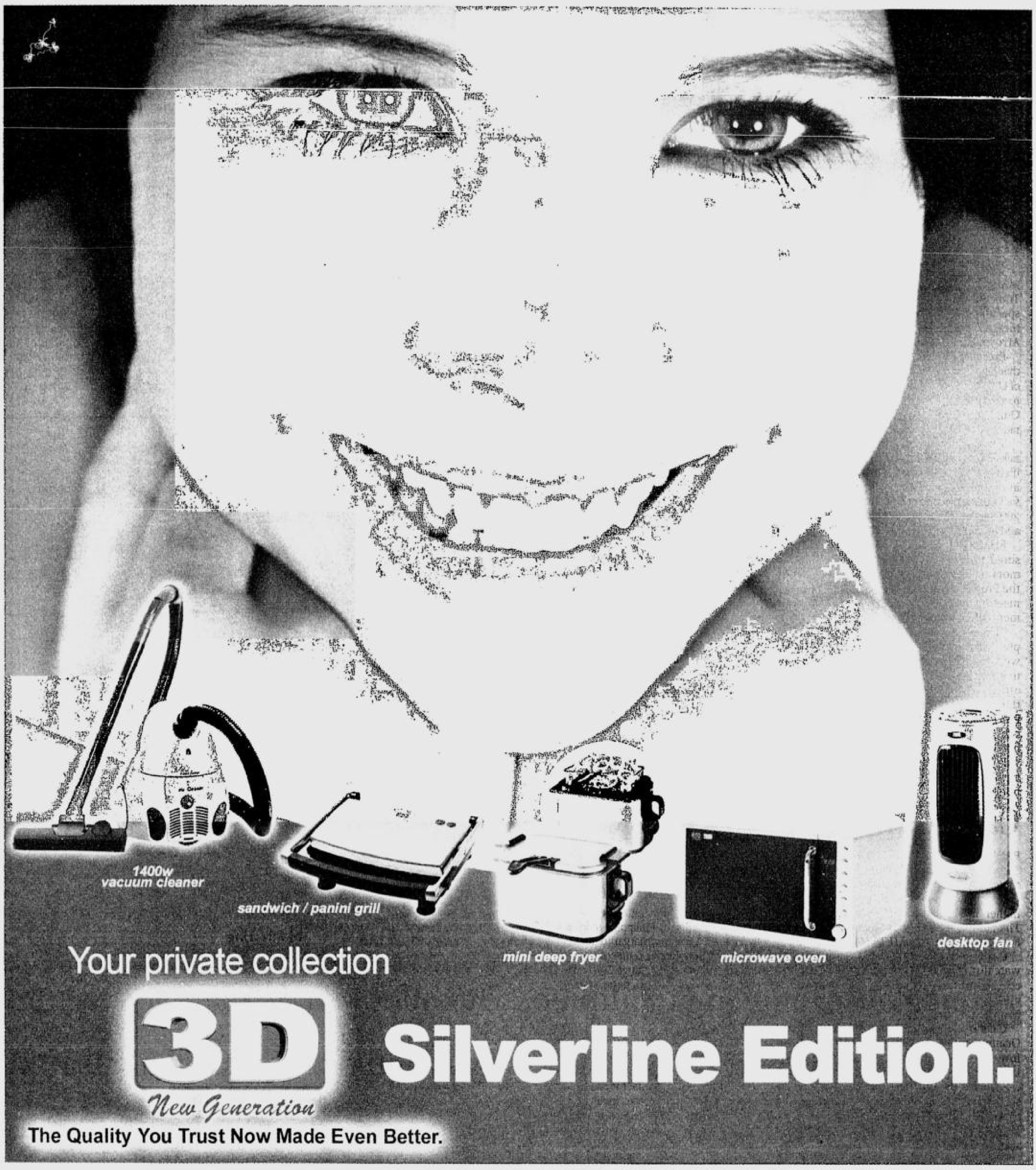
Most vocal

The Philippines is among the most vocal critics of Burma, but Romulo said he would "shut his mouth" on the issue of democratic reforms there until Manila has assumed ASEAN's chairmanship later this week from Malaysia.

Burma was forced to give up the rotating chairmanship of ASEAN this year following protests by the United States and Europe.

Burma has been under military rule since 1962, and the current crop of generals took power in 1988. They called elections in 1990 but refused to recognize the results, which gave a resounding victory to Suu Kyi's party.

ASEAN members are Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam and Myanmar. *AP*



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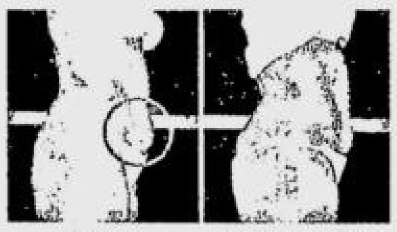

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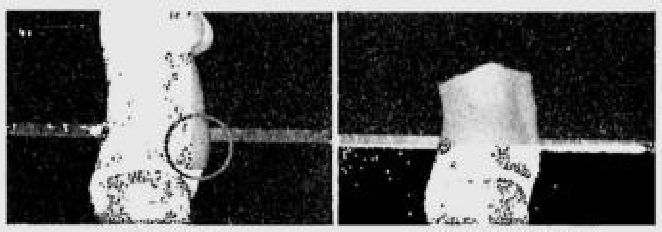

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Correction

IN THE JULY 24 issue, the banner story—"GMA in triumphal mood"—misstated that the term "annus horribilis" is associated with former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's "hair-raising" experiences in 1990.

The term "annus horribilis," which means a horrible year, became popular after Queen Elizabeth II used it to describe 1992—the year when Windsor Castle caught fire, and when the marriages of her sons Charles and Andrew broke down. It was also the year when her daughter Anne and husband Mark Phillips divorced.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to the Day Desk, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City, fax Nos. 897-47-93/94; e-mail address: daydesk@inquirer.com.ph.

Complaints about lack of fairness or objectivity may be sent to Lorna Kalaw Tirol, readers' advocate, e-mail address: readersadvocate@inquirer.com. ph or fax Nos. 897-47-93/94, Attn: Readers Advocate. Her phone number is 897-8808 Local 342.

Mideast conflict stirs Senate debate

By TJ Burgonio

AN ORDINARY RESOLUTION EXpressing the Philippine Senate's support for UN Secretary General Kofi Annan's call for ceasefire between Hezbollah and Israeli forces yesterday stirred a debate on the floor.

Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr., who filed Resolution No. 512, stressed the need for the senators to voice support for an immediate cessation of hostilities in view of the rising death toll in Lebanon and Israel.

"I was able to watch some footages showing the victims of this war... children who were crying. This would justly support the cessation of hostilities, and that is what we're only asking for," he explained on the floor.

After Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan referred the resolution to the committee on rules, Pimentel manifested that the matter be tackled on the floor.

Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, however, rose and objected to this, saying that the resolution should be tackled first at a committee hearing where diplomatic officials would be asked to give their view because of the sensitivity of the matter.

"We're going to express the sense of the Senate but we have an alliance with the United States of America, and they are supporting the ongoing conflict in that part of the world," he said.

"We have diplomatic relations with Israel. We might be misunderstood if we are going to tackle this immediately."

At this point, Senate President Manuel Villar Jr. suspended the session for a few minutes.

Upon resumption, Pimentel clarified that the resolution merely states that the senators "should support the stand of Kofi Annan, rather than the stand of any other protagonists: To install a ceasefire in Lebanon for the sake of humanity."

"In the matter of the war now going on in Lebanon, we should be very careful so that we don't unnecessarily express our sentiments in favor or against any of the protagonists," he said.

"And I'd like to assure Senator Enrile that it's not the intent of the resolution. It's not favoring the Israelis, neither does it favor the Hezbollah or even the Lebanese government."

Enrile insisted that the resolution be taken up by a committee first before it's tackled on the floor.

"I would suggest, before we tackle, we must hear the position of the executive department. We can't just act here, simply because we want to support the UN. We have to hear the voice of our diplomatic service in order that we can be guided properly," he said.

At this point, Pimentel amended his manifestation to have the resolution tackled by the committee on foreign relations, chaired by Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago. No one objected to this.

Meanwhile, Sen. Richard Gordon, chair of the Philippine National Red Cross, announced that the PNRC would accept "tracing requests" from Filipinos who have lost contact with their relatives in Lebanon.

Under this program, families could send tracing requests to the PNRC, including basic information to locate their missing relatives in the war-torn country. The PNRC, in turn, would turn forward these to the International Committee of Red Cross, which has delegates in Lebanon, he said.

"The program will enable immediate families of Filipino workers in Lebanon to send a short message or restore links with their missing relatives," Gordon said in a statement.

Iglesia ni Cristo: Moog ng pananampalataya at pagkakaisa

NOONG HULYO 27, 1914, sa pusod ng komunidad ng mahihirap at ordinaryong mamamayan sa Punta, Santa Ana, Manila, isinilang ang Iglesia ni Cristo (INC).

Sa loob ng nagdaang 92 taon, napatunayan ng Iglesia na posibleng magkaisa ang mga Pilipino. Bukod sa ito'y matibay na moog na pananampalataya, ang INC ay bastyon ng pagkakaisa at pagdadamayan.

SA PAGDIRIWANG ng ika-92 anibersaryo ng INC sa ika-27 ng Hulyo 2006, ipinapaabot ko po ang aking mainit na pagbati, sa ngalan ng aking mga kababayan sa Cavite, aking pamilya at mga mahal sa buhay.

MABUHAY ANG IGLESIA NI CRISTO!

Gobernador AYONG S. MALIKSI
LALAWIGAN NG CAVITE

N. Samar solon dies

By Joey A. Gabieta
PDI Visayas Bureau

TACLOBAN CITY—NORTHERN SAMAR REP. Romualdo Vicencio died yesterday of cirrhosis of the liver at the National Kidney Institute. He was 72.

Vicencio was diagnosed late last year and had been confined at the NKI for months until he died of the disease at 12:30 p.m. yesterday, according to his oldest son, Jalahad.

Vicencio, a member of the ruling party, was serving his last term as representative of the second congressional district of Northern Samar, which covers the towns of San Roque, Pambujan, Gamay, Laoang, Mapanas, Lapinig, Palapag, Silvino Lubos, Las Navas and Catubig, his place of birth.

"The family is saddened by the death of our father," Jalahad, reached on his mobile phone, told the INQUIRER.

He said his father will be buried at the Catholic cemetery in Catubig.

The Vicencio family operates a chain of pawnshops in the region.

Prior to his election as a congressman, Vicencio was a municipal trial court judge in Catarman, Northern Samar's provincial capital. In 1987, he ran and won as vice governor of the province.

In 1992, he won his congressional seat only after filing an electoral protest before the House of Representatives' Electoral Tribunal (HRET) against Wilmar Lucero. He was however declared winner by the HRET just days before the 1995 congressional elections.

Lawyer Eduardo de la Cruz, Northern Samar's provincial administrator, said that the entire provincial government led by Gov. Raul Daza was shocked and saddened by the death of Vicencio.

"When we learned of his death, Governor Daza immediately ordered for the lowering of the flag (at the Capitol) at half-staff as a sign of our mourning," De la Cruz said.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Thursday, July 27, 2006
16th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Jer 2:1-3, 7-8, 12-13
Gospel: Matthew 13:10-17

Jesus' disciples came to him with the question, "Why do you speak to them in parables?"

Jesus answered, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but not to these people. For the one who has, will be given more and he will have in abundance. But the one who does not have will be deprived of even what he has. That is why I speak to them in parables, because they look and do not see; they hear, but they do not listen or understand.

"In them the words of the prophet Isaiah are fulfilled: Much as you hear, you do not understand; much as you see, you do not perceive.

"For the heart of this people has grown dull. Their ears hardly hear and their eyes dare not see. If they were to see with their eyes, hear with their ears and understand with their heart, they would turn back and I would heal them.

"But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears, because they hear.

"For I tell you that many prophets and upright people would have longed to see the things you see, but they did not, and to hear the things you hear, but they did not hear it."

Commentary

The word comes to us: "I remember the devotion of your youth and how you loved me…" and yet we have discarded and ruined our relationship with God. We are a people, a nation, Church, leaders that have forsaken God, the source of living waters.

And Jesus speaks to us in parables because we are closed to his words and invitation. Parables force the listeners to assume that they know nothing, and that all they thought was so, isn't so. You can only begin to understand a parable if you admit you know nothing and that your heart is closed, set against change and has no intention of changing. There has to be a break in one's heart and mind to hear and begin to understand. Jesus is frustrated with the closed-heartedness of those who hear him. Does he feel the same way about us after all this time?

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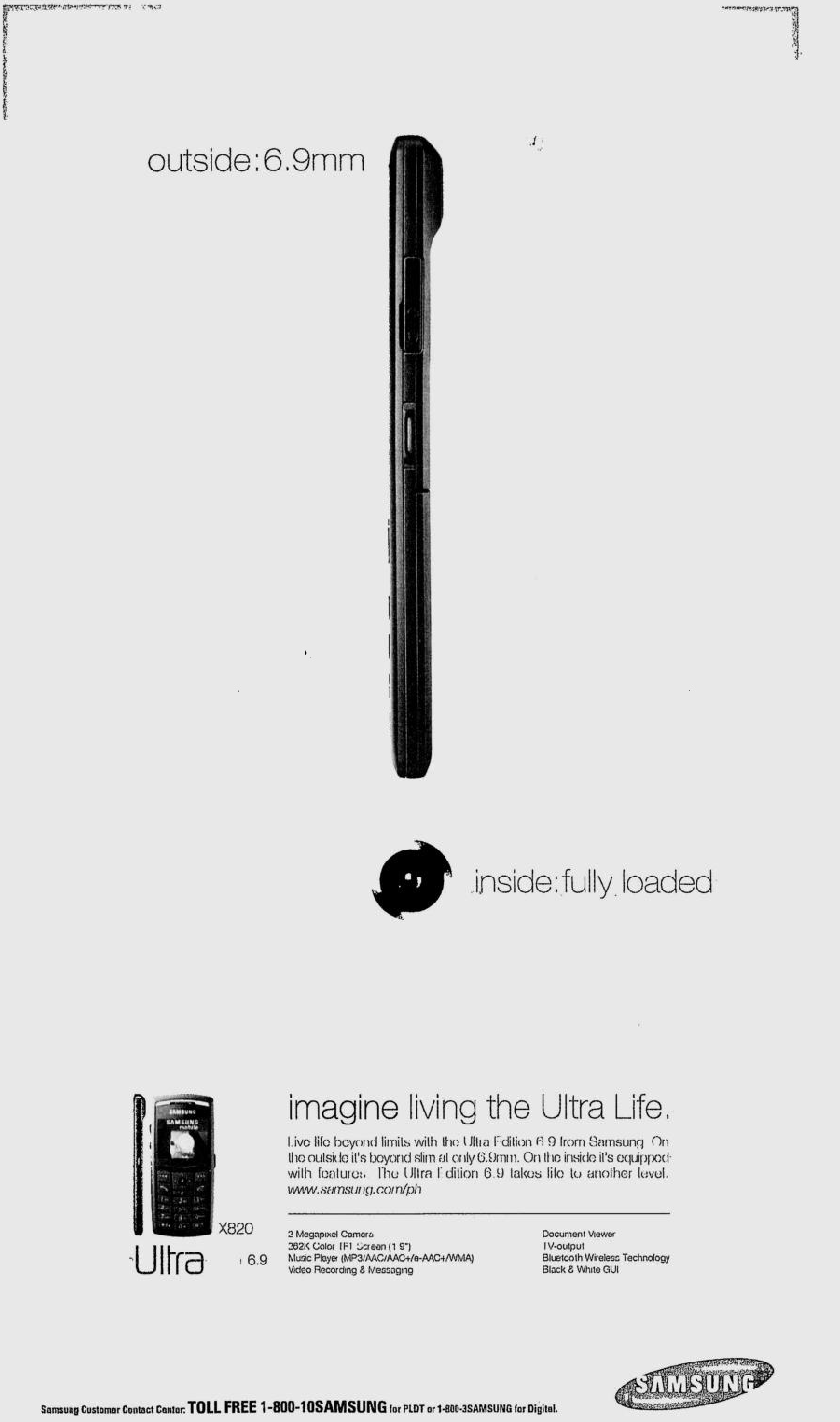

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ADVT.

'RUNNING OUT OF TIME'

Next 3 months crucial to Cha-cha

By Philip C. Tubeza

IT WILL NOT BE THE ONE VOICE CITIZENS' group but the coming "election fever" that could derail the Cha-cha train if the latter does not get to its destination in the next 90 days, said House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles.

According to Nograles, the next three months will be "very crucial" for the Charter change campaign as he foresees that all political parties will already be busy preparing for the 2007 national elections by November.

"I think we are running out of time," he said.

If by end-October, there is still no constituent assembly or a people's initiative—the two modes of changing the Constitution favored by Cha-cha proponents—it will be an uphill battle for Cha-cha, the congressman said.

He said the focus on Charter change would be lost by then as election fever would have set in. Political parties would be holding their conventions to choose their slate of local and national candidates for the elections next year, Nograles said.

But the House leader said he was still hopeful that Charter change will succeed, especially its promise of the establishment of a federal system.

"The senators who won in the 2004 elections came to Mindanao and they all promised to work for a federal Mindanao. But when elected, they forgot that promise," said the Davao lawmaker.

Nograles said House Speaker Jose de Venecia may yet pull "a miracle" by getting the necessary votes in the House needed for Congress to convene as a constituent assembly.

"He's keeping his cards close to his chest. I'm sure he will provide the necessary miracle when the time comes," he said.

De Venecia said on Monday that the last 100 session days of the present Congress would be the "final chance" for Cha-cha proponents in the House to revise the Constitution.

"We are already running out of time in the campaign to amend the Charter's political and economic provisions even without the impeachment complaints," De Venecia said.

"More than anything, this last session gives us the final chance to replace through Charter reform an inefficient and inflexible system that, by its weakness breeds extremist plots to seize power," he said.

The Speaker said the House was only 12 votes short of the 195 it needs for it to convene a constituent assembly and revise the Constitution without the Senate's participation.

When Cagayan de Oro Rep. Constantino Jaraula filed House Resolution 1230 calling for a constituent assembly last April, the House majority was 22 signatures short of required votes.

As for the people's initiative, De Venecia said proponents of this mode only needed the Commission on Elections' verification of the signatures of those who endorsed the petition in the city of Makati.

"Today, the proposed constituent assembly of Congress is short of just 12 votes, and the people's initiative—endorsed by 79 provinces, 115 cities, 1,500 municipalities and almost 42,00 barangays—has already far exceeded the constitutional requirement with their nine million signatures," De Venecia said.

But One Voice, which describes itself as nonpartisan group, wants the Arroyo administration to scrap the people's initiative which it considers "legally flawed."

Iñigo Zobel denies role in Feb. 24 plot

By Tina G. Santos

ZOBEL

BUSINESSMAN IÑIGO Zobel yesterday denied claims by former Ambassador Roy Señeres that he was among a group of businessmen who encouraged the military's withdrawal of support from President Macapagal-Arroyo on Feb. 24.

"I am a not, nor have I been at any time directly or indirectly involved in any capacity, with any plan to withdraw support from the government and its duly constituted authorities," Zobel said in his affidavit sent to the National Bureau of Investigation yesterday afternoon.

Willing to present himself

Zobel is currently in Paris, France but he subscribed his affidavit in front of the consul general in order for him to cooperate in the investigation, said Regional Director Reynaldo Esmeralda, chief of the NBI-Special Task Force.

"But he has expressed willingness to personally present himself if needed," Esmeralda added.

Zobel claimed that he met Señeres at the residence of his friend and business partner, construction magnate, Philip Cruz, at the latter's Dasmariñas home sometime last year.

He said he was holding a business meeting with Cruz when "a good friend of Cruz," a certain Morales arrived together with Señeres.

'Garci tapes'

Zobel recounted in his affidavit that Señeres started talking about the "Garci tapes" and "he made us listen to what was allegedly a recording of the original tape in his cellular phone."

He added that he promptly left Cruz's residence shortly after Morales and Señeres arrived as he had another dinner meeting to attend to.

Zobel, along with Cruz and ABC-5 television chair Antonio "Tonyboy" Cojuangco, had been named by former Ambassador Roy Señeres as among the civilians who had encouraged military officers to withdraw support from Ms Arroyo.

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Department Circular No. DC2006-07-0010

Adopting Further Amendments to the WESM Rules

Whereas, Rule 8.6.1 of the Wholesale Electricity Spot Market (WESM) Rules provides for the approval by the Department of Energy (DOE) of proposals for any changes in the WESM Rules upon the endorsement by the Board of Directors of the Philippine Electricity Market Corporation (PEM Board);

Whereas, on April 20, 2006, May 16, 2006 and June 15, 2006, the Interim Rules Change Committee has approved a resolution endorsing for approval by the PEM Board certain changes in the WESM Rules concerning provisions on limiting the liability of the PEM Board, dispute resolution, billing and settlements and metering;

Whereas, after discussion, the PEM Board has resolved on June 6, 2006 and June 21, 2006 to approve for endorsement to the DOE the aforesaid changes to the WESM Rules;

NOW THEREFORE, pursuant to its authority under the WESM Rules, the DOE hereby issues, adopts and promulgates the following amendments to the WESM Rules.

A. WESM Rules

1. Incorporation of Clause 1.4.9 to read -

   The members of the PEM Board are not liable for any loss or damage suffered or incurred by a Participant or any other person unless the PEM Board or any of its members, as the case may be, acted with malice, manifest partiality, bad faith, gross incompetence or gross negligence.

2. Incorporation of Clause 1.4.10 to read -

   Notwithstanding clause 1.4.9, except for liability arising out of conduct involving malice, manifest partiality, bad faith, gross incompetence or gross negligence, if the PEM Board is or the members thereof are made liable to pay any amount for loss or damage suffered or incurred in the exercise of its functions under the WESM Rules and WESM Manuals, the PEM Board or the members thereof shall be indemnified for the full amount adjudged; and, for costs or expenses incurred by that person defending himself in the related proceedings.

3. Clause 3.15.3 is amended to read -

   The security provided by a *WESM Member* under this clause 3.15 shall be either:

   (a) A bank guarantee in a form and from a bank acceptable to the *Market Operator*, or

   (b) Another immediate, irrevocable and unconditional commitment in a form and from a bank or other institution acceptable to the *Market Operator*, or

   (c) Surety bond issued by a surety or insurance company duly accredited by the Office of the Insurance Commissioner of the Philippines; or

   (d) **Such other forms of security or guarantee acceptable to the *Market Operator*.**

4. Clause 3.15.8.3 is amended to read -

   The *trading limit* for a *WESM Member* at any time shall not be greater than 95% of the total value of the security provided by the *WESM Member* to the *Market Operator* under clauses 3.15.3 (a), (b) and (c).

5. Clause 4.6.2.1 is amended to read -

   The MSP that is contracted by the MTP for a particular metering point shall retrieve the metering data from the meter and transmit the data to the Market Operator for billing and settlement.

   However, the MSP shall not make, cause or allow any alteration to the original stored meter data as retrieved in the metering installation.

   At its option, the Market Operator may also directly retrieve the meter data.

   The MSP with a Certificate of Authority from ERC and registered with MO must be capable of sending meter data in the required format of MO. An MSP must have its own Meter Data Retrieval System and compatible with the MO Meter Data Collection System.

6. Clause 7.3.14 is amended to read -

   Notwithstanding clause 7.3.13, except for liability arising from conduct involving malice, manifest **partiality**, bad faith, gross incompetence or gross negligence, if the Dispute Resolution Administrator, the dispute resolution panel or the members thereof are made liable to pay any amount for loss or damage xxx.

7. The definition of Billing Period under Chapter 11 is amended to read -

   Billing period. The period of one month commencing **at 00:00 hours of the twenty sixth (26th) day of each calendar month to 24:00 hours of the twenty-fifth (25th) day of the next** calendar month.

B. Separability Clause

If for any reason, any section or provision of this Department Circular is declared unconstitutional or invalid, such parts not affected shall remain in full force and effect.

C. Effectivity

This Department Circular shall take effect immediately following its publication in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Energy Center, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City, Metro Manila, July 20, 2006.

(Sgd.) **RAPHAEL P.M. LOTILLA**
Secretary

(PDI - July 27, 2006)

22-HOUR WATER CUTOFF IN MANILA AND PASAY

Some areas of Manila and Pasay City will have no water for 22 hours starting at 11:30 p.m., Saturday, July 29, 2006, until 9:30 p.m., Sunday, July 30, 2006.

The water service interruption is due to the replacement of a 500mm-diameter gate valve on the existing 500mm-diameter mainline at Espiritu Pumping Station in Manila.

The areas that will have no water for 22 hours are the following:

In Manila: Areas bounded by Taft Ave., Remedios St., Vito Cruz and Roxas Blvd.; Tripa de Galina, San Andres, PNR Track and Taft Ave.; and San Andres, PNR Track, Zobel Roxas and Taft Ave.

In Pasay: Areas along Taft Ave. from Menlo St. to Libertad; along Donada St. from Vito Cruz to Gil Puyat; along Leveriza St. from Vito Cruz to Gil Puyat; Along FB Harrison from Vito Cruz to Chingkiang; and along Roxas Blvd. from Vito Cruz to near Dapitan St.

Big establishments to be affected by the water service interruption are Ospital ng Maynila, Manila Zoo, Hyatt Hotel, Century Park Hotel, US Embassy, Sheraton Hotel, Central Bank, Harrison Plaza, Manila Yacht Club, Philippine Navy, Aristocrat, Grand Boulevard, LRT Station, Rizal Memorial Coliseum, Bureau of Plant Industry, Malate Catholic School, Manila Bay Club, St. Scholastica, La Salle Taft and La Salle St. Benilde, Rhodes Realty, Ystaphil, Alt Vitas, Harmony Homes, NAESS Shipping, Burgundy, Evervic Asia Development Corporation and Estasol Realty, PICC, and CCP Complex.

The repair and maintenance works are part of Maynilad's continuing program to upgrade and improve its water service to its customers in the West Zone.

Affected customers are advised to store water good for the duration of the water service interruption. They may also call Maynilad Water Hotline 1626 or text Maynilad through SMART 7001626 for the water-rationing schedule.

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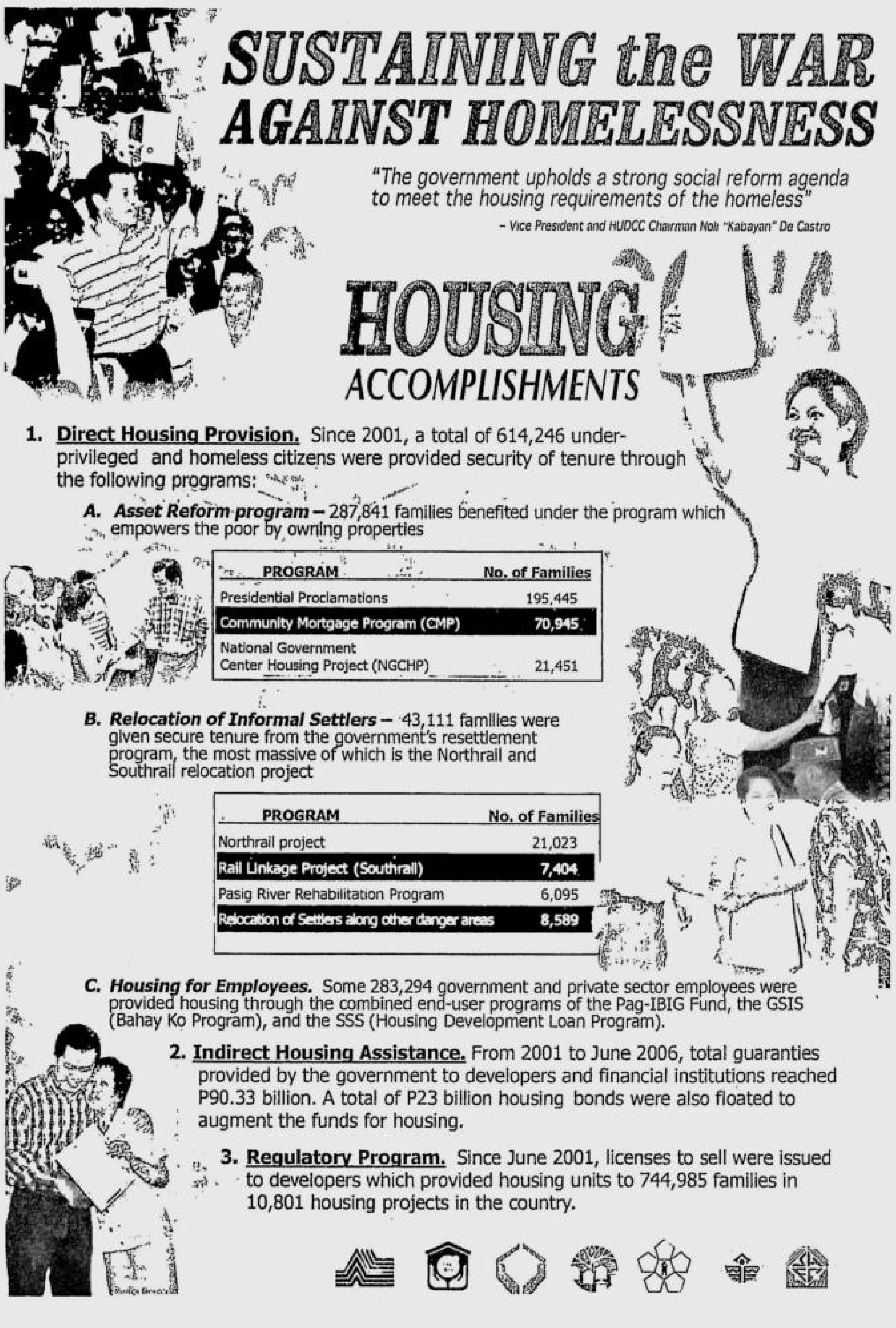

SUSTAINING the WAR AGAINST HOMELESSNESS

"The government upholds a strong social reform agenda to meet the housing requirements of the homeless"

– Vice President and HUDCC Chairman Noli "Kabayan" De Castro

HOUSING ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1. **Direct Housing Provision.** Since 2001, a total of 614,246 underprivileged and homeless citizens were provided security of tenure through the following programs:

   A. ***Asset Reform program –*** 287,841 families benefited under the program which empowers the poor by owning properties

PROGRAM	No. of Families
Presidential Proclamations	195,445
Community Mortgage Program (CMP)	70,945
National Government Center Housing Project (NGCHP)	21,451

   B. ***Relocation of Informal Settlers –*** 43,111 families were given secure tenure from the government's resettlement program, the most massive of which is the Northrail and Southrail relocation project

PROGRAM	No. of Families
Northrail project	21,023
Rail Linkage Project (Southrail)	7,404
Pasig River Rehabilitation Program	6,095
Relocation of Settlers along other danger areas	8,589

   C. ***Housing for Employees.*** Some 283,294 government and private sector employees were provided housing through the combined end-user programs of the Pag-IBIG Fund, the GSIS (Bahay Ko Program), and the SSS (Housing Development Loan Program).

2. **Indirect Housing Assistance.** From 2001 to June 2006, total guaranties provided by the government to developers and financial institutions reached P90.33 billion. A total of P23 billion housing bonds were also floated to augment the funds for housing.

3. **Regulatory Program.** Since June 2001, licenses to sell were issued to developers which provided housing units to 744,985 families in 10,801 housing projects in the country.

2 int'l groups hit GMA rights record, probers

From page A1

In its 42-page report, the IFFM questioned the integrity and independence of the Philippine National Police's Task Force Usig in solving the killing of leftist activists (among them lawyers and judges) and journalists.

It called for an independent investigation of the killings.

The IFFM observed that Ms Arroyo had ordered an investigation of and eventual stop to the extrajudicial killings—an order that resulted in the formation of Task Force Usig.

"So far, however," the IFFM said, "Task Force Usig has not proven to be an independent body: It is chaired by the PNP, which has a poor record as far as the effective investigation of the killings is concerned and which is mistrusted by the Philippine people."

It said it would bring the Philippine human rights situation to the attention of the international community.

In its statement, AI said it would soon issue a report on and launch an international campaign against political killings in the Philippines.

"It is encouraging that President Arroyo condemned the killing of activists in her [Sona], but she must now show she means business by implementing concrete measures to prevent the deaths of more activists," said Tim Parritt, Deputy Director of AI's Asia-Pacific Programme.

"The government has a duty to protect every person in the Philippines, no matter their political persuasion or whether or not security personnel are linked to the attacks," he said.

Too frightened

According to Parritt, many witnesses to political killings—even close kin of the victims—are simply too frightened to come forward.

"If the government wants witnesses to testify, it must strengthen the implementation of witness protection laws," he said.

The AI said death threats and other forms of intimidation of witnesses and fear of reprisal were the major problems contributing to the repeated failure by police or prosecutors to file charges, or to trials failing to lead to the conviction of the guilty.

It said these obstacles were making it extremely hard for the victims' families to see justice done.

On paper

"Investigations often fall short of international standards, which require investigators to be independent of those allegedly responsible and to have the necessary investigative skills and resources," the AI said.

On June 15-20, the IFFM conducted interviews with the families of slain judges and lawyers, as well as with, among others, Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno, Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban, Chief State Prosecutor Jovencito Zuño, members of the Senate and the House, and an official of Task Force Usig.

"On paper, the Philippines is indeed a republic with democratic institutions including an elected President and separate executive, legislative and judicial branches. Nevertheless, since 2001 not only 15 lawyers and 10 judges have been killed in the Philippines but also almost 700 other individuals," the IFFM said in its report.

"All were unarmed citizens. None of the killers has been convicted. Taking into account that all democratic institutions are formally in place, the IFFM considers the situation especially alarming. This makes it abundantly clear that either the constitutional state does not function properly or that there are powers undermining its proper functioning," it added.

The IFFM was invited by the Philippine lawyers' group Counsels for the Defense of Liberties and the human rights group Karapatan. But it said it was independent of both groups as it conducted its own interviews and other forms of data gathering.

The team is composed of Jan Bless, the head of delegation and a deputy judge in the Netherlands; Nol Vermolen, a judge from Belgium; and Gerard Boot, Jo Dereymaeker, Henri Karsken, Judith Lichtenberg, Angela Meijer and Andrei Van der Streek.

Sort of indictment

The IFFM said it had submitted a copy of its report to Laura Santos, the Philippine chargé d'affaires in The Hague.

"The reason it gave a copy to [Santos] was to apprise the Philippine government of its findings," lawyer Edre Olalia, host committee coordinator during the IFFM members' stay in the country, told the INQUIRER.

"It's a sort of an indictment," he said.

List of victims

The slain judges and the dates of their deaths in the IFFM statistics were Judge Henrick Gingoyon, Dec. 31, 2005; Estrellita Paas, Sept. 23, 2005; Voltaire Rosales, June 10, 2004; Paterno Tiamson, Feb. 21, 2004; Milnar Lammawin, Aug. 10, 2004; Pinera Biden, May 17, 2003; Eugenio Valles, April 25, 2002; Oscar Gaby Uson, Sept. 27 2002; Ariston Rubio, Oct. 31, 2001; and Hassan Ibnohajil, Feb. 5, 2001.

The slain lawyers and the dates of their deaths were Rogelio Montero, May 15, 2006; Carlo Umingga, April 14, 2006; Godofredo Pacenio, March 31, 2006; Victor Padilla, Sept. 6, 2005; Norman Bocar, Sept. 1, 2005; Ambrosio Matias, May 8, 2005; Felidito Dacut, March 14, 2005; Teresita Vidamo, Feb. 9, 2005; Reuel Dalguntas, Feb. 5, 2005; Edgar Calizo Sr., Nov. 22, 2004; Arbeth Yongco, Oct. 11, 2004; Victoria Mangapit-Sturch, April 13, 2004; and Juvy Magsino, Feb. 13, 2004.

"There is a pattern in the harassment and killing of human rights lawyers and judges, which must be seen in the light of other killings in the Philippines, including the killing of members of leftist groups," the IFFM said in its report.

It said that prior to the attacks, the victims were usually labeled by the military as "members or supporters of the CPP/NPA (Communist Party of the Philippines/New People's Army)," "communists," or "enemies of the state."

It quoted such military documents as "Knowing the Enemy" and "Trinity of War."

"The next step is that victims are threatened and usually subjected to surveillance by the military. The way victims are killed is also similar. Almost all assassinations are shooting incidents with a hit-and-run character conducted by a team of unidentified motorcycle-riding men," the IFFM said.

"Even the most brutal atrocities hardly elicit any decisive action or condemnation from the government; and to this date, all cases have remained unsolved," it said.

The IFFM said almost all the lawyers killed were human rights defenders and/or involved in cases that might have affected elitist interest.

It took note, for instance, that Gingoyon was a human rights lawyer before he became a judge. He was also the one who ordered the government to pay P62 million to the Philippine International Air Terminals Corp. or Piatco, the builder of the Naia Terminal 3.

"They have all been threatened," the IFFM said of the 11 cases of harassment and killing of lawyers and judges that it had studied.

It focused its investigation on the killing of Gingoyon and Bocar in Samar, Dacut in Leyte, Yongco in Cebu City, and Magsino in Mindoro Oriental, and looked into the harassment received by lawyers Romeo Capulong (a UN justice), Jobert Pahilga, Ernesto Peñaflor, Gina Co, Kit Enriquez and Pergentino Deri-On Jr.

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More people backing Cha-cha ...

From page A1

porters that the previous survey showed that only 23 percent favored Charter change.

Not big

"While the difference (between those who favor and those against it) is not too big, before people were not aware of the significance of Charter change," Ermita said.

Ermita said efforts of the Palace-created Charter change advocacy commission had been paying off "because we can see in the survey that more and more people are favorable to Charter change."

Malacañang is supporting Charter change to pave the way for a shift to a parliamentary form of government, but groups including Catholic bishops are against it partly because it will extend the term of office of incumbent elected officials.

The sentiment in favor of constitutional change now was most pronounced in Mindanao (41 percent) and in the poorest class E (47 percent).

Metro Manila rejects

But in Metro Manila 45 percent reject Charter change.

Most Filipinos appear to view constitutional change as "lacking urgency," says Pulse Asia in a statement.

Less than half (40 percent) said they were likely to vote, should a plebiscite on Charter change be held today.

The Pulse Asia survey, which was conducted from June 24 to July 8, covered 1,200 representative adults 18 years and above. It has a error of margin of plus or minus 3 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level.

While virtually half of all Filipinos agree that the best way to amend the Constitution is through a people's initiative, a considerable majority of those aware of the recent signature campaign in support of the initiative do not approve of the manner by which the signatures were collected, the survey also found.

The signature campaign is spearheaded by Sigaw ng Bayan and local executives and is supported by President Macaapgal-Arroyo.

The survey defined people's initiative as "one where the citizens themselves are the ones who will propose the changes or amendments in accordance with conditions set by the Constitution."

Around 48 percent of those surveyed preferred a people's initiative to a constituent assembly (28 percent) and a constitutional convention (23 percent).

The percentage of Filipinos considering the initiative as the best method for Charter change increased from 40 percent in March.

"The people are becoming more and more aware of Charter change as an issue... now it has gone to a point that they are already talking about the mode, people's initiative especially," Ermita said.

"We hope it can invoke that if this succeeds (people's initiative) that the sovereign will of the people should be followed," he said.

The survey also found that almost seven in every 10 Filipinos had either heard or read something about the recent nationwide signature campaign in support of the people's initiative.

The level of awareness was highest in Metro Manila (84 percent) and in Class ABC (87 percent).

Of those aware of the campaign, about 65 percent do not favor the manner by which the signatures are collected across the country. This sentiment is shared by 59 percent to 70 percent of Filipinos across geographic areas and socio-economic classes. *With a report from Kate Pedroso, PDI Research*

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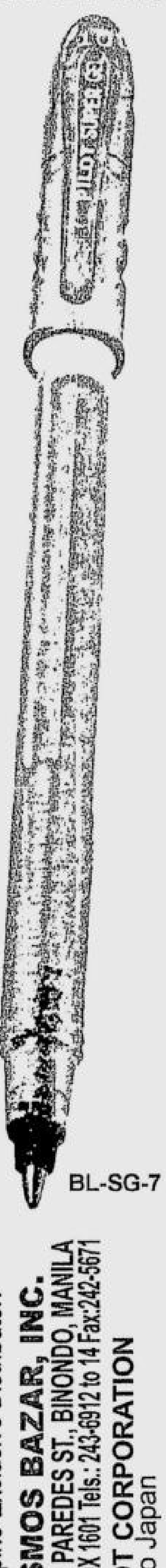

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War tearing Filipino-Lebanese …

From page A1

he's safe," Anthony said, anxiety evident in his voice.

Two days before the war broke out, their mother Epifania left for a vacation in her native Davao together with their youngest brother, 15-year-old David.

Anthony and his other brothers were to join them in Davao.

A source from the Department of Foreign Affairs told the INQUIRER that the chartered and commercial flights shouldered by the Philippine government were solely for Filipino nationals.

"The children are Filipino citizens because their mothers are Filipinos. Unfortunately, our government's priority is our Filipino nationals," the source said.

Grandma's tearful goodbye

Sharon Maderista's Lebanese husband died last January but she and their two sons have a close relationship with his parents and relatives.

Maderista said her mother-in-law, who had fled to a mountain resort, returned to say goodbye to her grandsons, aged 12 and 7, after learning that they would soon leave with other Filipino evacuees.

"We had a tearful goodbye. My mother-in-law loves her grandsons very much, but she also wants to make sure that they are safe. And it's safer here in the Philippines," Maderista said.

It was a different story for Amelia Espiritu, 37, and her 8-year-old son.

"My husband didn't want us, especially our son, to go. But I can't let that happen. My priority is my son's safety," Espiritu said.

She has been separated from her Lebanese husband for a few months, and he visits their son regularly.

"I'll call him up and tell him that we're here," she said.

Friends and neighbors

The Filipino-Lebanese children who arrived on Tuesday are friends back in Lebanon, their mothers said.

Most of them are neighbors, or they see each other regularly during gatherings in the Filipino community.

They speak Arabic and fluent English, but not Filipino.

Many of them looked tired from the long journey that included fleeing their homes to stay in a cramped relocation center, taking a bus ride to Damascus, and finally boarding a plane for the 17-hour flight to Manila.

The youngest to arrive was a 2-month-old boy.

His mother, Gemma Ablao, was relieved that her son was now safe, but she expressed worry for her Filipino husband Efren, whom she left at the Church of the Miraculous Medal in Sassine, Beirut, which has served as a relocation center for Filipino workers.

"I cried really hard," Ablao said. "He had to stay behind at the center because women and children are the priority. I hope he'll be in the next batch that's coming home."

Tug-of-war daily

According to the returning women, Lebanese "Madams" (employers) are engaging in a tug-of-war with Philippine officials and Fr. Agustin Advincula over Filipino household helpers who have chosen to flee.

"The Madams would storm the relocation center and look for their house help. They literally pull some of the maids away," said the women, who had also worked as domestic helpers in Lebanon and who asked not to be named.

The women thanked God for the Philippine Embassy and labor officials, as well as for Advincula, the lone Filipino priest in Lebanon.

"They would say that the Filipina is not at the relocation center when she's actually hiding inside," the women said.

The Madams think only of how much they had spent to get their Filipino maids, the women said.

Philippine Ambassador to Beirut Al Francis Bichara confirmed the returnees' account to the INQUIRER when reached in an overseas call yesterday.

"That's true," Bichara said, adding that the tug-of-war was happening almost daily at the Church of the Miraculous Medal.

"We have to intervene or hide the Filipino worker. Anybody who wants to go home, we'll take them," he said.

Violent encounters

Bichara cited instances when an employer would file a phony case, such as theft, against her Filipino maid who had sought shelter at the relocation center just to be able to take the latter back.

"That's why we have to hide some of them," he said.

The envoy said one of the embassy's male Lebanese staff members had been caught in the middle of violent encounters between some Madams and their house help at the relocation center.

As a result, he said, the embassy had decided to hire policemen to guard the center.

Lebanese employers shell out as much as $3,000 to hire a foreign domestic helper, Bichara said.

"Some of them think of how they've spent so much on their helpers who will only leave them after a few months. Even in this time of crisis, they're still after their investment," he said.

On the other hand, some Filipino domestic helpers prefer to stay in Lebanon, the returnees said.

Patience

"Some of them were already at the relocation center, but they decided to leave. They said there are no jobs in the Philippines, so they will just die in Lebanon," the women said.

COMING HOME ONE STEP AT A TIME: OFW is assisted by a companion and an airport personnel down the ramp after their plane carrying the second batch of evacuees from Lebanon arrived at the Villamor Air Base at 10 p.m. on Tuesday. LYN RILLON

Fortunately, some of the returnees said, Philippine labor and embassy officials in Lebanon were "very patient and kind."

"We can't ask for anything more from them because they help us in any way they can. It's really sad to think that they would be the last ones to leave Beirut because they have to take care of the Filipinos there," some of the returnees said.

But other returnees had no such glowing words to say of Philippine officials.

Jovita Miguel pointed out that there were Filipino nationals in two Lebanese jails.

"The embassy is ignoring them," Miguel said, and named the jails as Tripoli and Baabda.

Only prayers

In Bayambang, Pangasinan, Fernando Sanchez can do nothing but pray for his wife Josephine's safety.

Josephine was barely past her seventh month working as a domestic helper in Beirut when Hezbollah guerrillas made a daring incursion into northern Israel on July 12, killing eight Israeli soldiers and taking two others as hostages.

Filipinos have since been returning to the Philippines in batches, but to her family's dismay, Josephine was not in any one of them.

"She has left Beirut with her employer. She said they are living in the mountains, where her employer has a vacation home," said Jennifer Sanchez, Josephine's 19-year-old daughter.

Despite pleas for her to join the evacuation, Josephine—Soping to her family and neighbors—has sent text messages saying she was determined to stay.

"She said they are very far from the fighting and they cannot hear the explosions in the mountains, so she doesn't feel afraid," Fernando said.

Since the war began, Josephine has been keeping in touch with her family through the cell phone of her Filipino friend, who was also taken to the mountains by her employer.

But her family is unable to call her.

Sleeplessness

"Somehow, our worries are lessened whenever Soping tells us not to be afraid for her in her text messages. Whenever I get uneasy about her condition, I just pray. I also tell our children to pray for their mother," said Fernando, a janitor in Bayambang's municipal hall.

Nonetheless, the children worry.

"We are worried for my mother's safety," said Jennifer. "My father can't sleep at night. We want her to come home but she doesn't want to. It's because of our poor life here. She's a very caring and loving mother." With a report from Gian S. Camacho, contributor

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From page A1

The latest arrivals constituted the third and fourth batches of Filipinos who had volunteered to leave Lebanon amid escalating bombardment on both sides and Israel's threat to expand the ground war deeper into southern Lebanon, the stronghold of the Hezbollah.

But while the cash-strapped government received a much-needed boost for "Oplan Sagip OFW sa Lebanon," a hint of friction among DFA officials emerged yesterday over the flow of evacuation funds to the Philippine mission in Beirut.

In a media briefing, Asuque said the DFA "has called the attention" of the Philippine ambassador to Lebanon, Alfrancis Bichara, after the latter told GMA 7 on Tuesday the embassy had run out of money and was yet to receive fresh funds for "Oplan Sagip."

"As the ambassador you should direct requests for funds not to reporters but to the proper authorities, like the assistant secretary for finance," Asuque said.

Envoy stands by statement

Reached by phone in Beirut yesterday, Bichara told the INQUIRER he was standing by the statement he had made in the TV interview—that the embassy is "running out of funds" for the evacuation.

The diplomat said that with no fresh funds coming in, the mission had been drawing mainly from a $50,000 budget representing embassy income and contingency fund.

Half of that amount was already being used for the maintenance of the evacuation center alone, he said, referring to the Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal parish in Sassine, Beirut.

Speed up fund releases

"They (officials in Manila) should have standby funds; they should accelerate the movement of funds," he stressed.

Bichara said the embassy has been spending $68 per evacuee, the amount only covering transportation as well as visa and airport terminal fees.

DFA officials have been reiterating in the media that up to P150 million had been set aside by Malacañang for the evacuation effort, excluding funds coming from the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration.

Owwa chief Marianito Roque yesterday as-

IN THE KNOW

IOM formed in 1951

THE INTERNATIONAL Organization for Migration (IOM), first known as the Provisional Intergovernmental Committee for the Movement of Migrants from Europe, was created in 1951 to help European governments identify resettlement countries for about 11 million people uprooted by the Second World War. It also arranged transport for nearly one million migrants in the 1950s.

Decades and several name changes later, IOM's scope has broadened to include migration management assistance to governments and migrants worldwide. IOM, which promotes humane and orderly migration, now has 118 member states and offices in more than 100 countries. It has an annual operating budget of nearly $1 billion.

The organization opened its first office in the Philippines in 1979. The three staffers of the Ermita, Manila-office assisted in the resettlement of Vietnamese, Cambodian and Laotian refugees to different countries.

Another office, which opened in 1981 in Palawan, was responsible for the transportation of Vietnamese "boat people" who had arrived in the Philippines.

In 1995, IOM Philippines was tasked to implement a demobilization and reintegration program for former members of the Moro National Liberation Front.

When the Geneva Headquarters underwent reorganization in 2001, it transferred various functions and staff to the Philippines, creating the IOM Administrative Center. *Cyril L. Bonabente, PDI Research*

Fil-Am Black Eyed Pea wears

From page A1

INQUIRER when asked about the shiny red, blue, and yellow buckle—quite an eyecatcher even on a strip of pointed metal studs.

Pineda, who is of Filipino-African-American descent, has always proclaimed pride in his Pinoy heritage. He makes an effort to speak in Tagalog at every turn, especially when answering questions, to the delight of local fans. In fact, the very popular band has two Filipino songs among their hits.

"*Maraming salamat sa suporta nila!*" Pineda, flashing a wide grin, told reporters at the airport upon the Black Eyed Peas arrival yesterday morning, for a major gig tonight at the Araneta Coliseum in Quezon City.

(On his own, Pineda said, he has been working on a solo album in collaboration with Filipino artists from the San Francisco Bay Area.)

Viva Concerts, producer of tonight's show, said the Peas might pay a courtesy call on President Macapagal-Arroyo today, on top of TV appearances to promote the concert—the Manila leg of their "Monkey Business World Tour."

The Peas—Pineda, Stacy "Fergie" Ferguson, Jaime Gomez and William

HOW CAN YOU TELL THERE'S A FILIPINO among the Black Eyed Peas? Allen Pineda, a.k.a. Apl.de.ap. wears the flag right up front where it can't be missed. JESS YUSON

James Adams Jr., a.k.a. will.i.am—had flown in from Taiwan, where they performed on Tuesday night.

Snap 'em

Armed with digital and cell phone cameras, fans—among them airport

and airline employees;
and customs staff—eage
the group at the Ninoy A
national Airport.

Shortly after they step
Cathay Pacific carrier, not
walked up to the Peas t
tographs taken with th
Gomez and Adams gamel
the pretty Ferguson had t
away, limping, after a fe
apparently nursing a spra

Funds for landslide v

Pineda said tonight's co
so a fund-raiser for the v
February landslide in Gu
saugon, St. Bernard, Sou
ern Leyte. It would be a "v
energetic" performance t
could last for over two hou
he said, "with a lot of imp
visation and free-styling."

Fans can expect to h
the Filipino song "Beb
and the Peas' ot
adrenalin-pumping h
such as "Where is the Lov
"Let's Get it Started," "S
Up" and "My Humps."

The "Monkey Busin
World Tour" is one of
most expensive concerts

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ay for 450 . . .

sured that there's no problem about the budget (for repatriation).

Based on reports from the Commission on Audit, the Owwa workers fund as of Dec. 31, 2004 had a balance of P8.1 billion.

"We put them on board as soon as flight seats are available," Roque told reporters.

Asuque further intimated that the department was not yet done with Bichara, who was formerly governor of Albay. Asked if the envoy faced a reprimand, he said "we will address that later when the priorities of the plan are completed."

"If there's a problem with the banks (in Beirut) there are other ways (for money to reach the mission); the roads are still open," Asuque said. "All the embassy had to do is file a request for replenishment."

Owwa benefits

Roque also assured the returning OFWs that their Owwa benefits would not end with free transportation back to the Philippines and their respective provinces.

He said the OFWs could avail themselves of livelihood assistance from Owwa. They also have the option to seek local employment via the Public Employment Services Offices in their hometowns or seek redeployment abroad through the help of the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration.

No casualties

Labor Secretary Arturo Brion said there were no Filipino casualties in northern Israeli towns targeted by Lebanon-based Hezbollah fighters.

"We have no Filipino casualty because the targeted] areas ... are far from where Filipinos work," Brion said, citing the report of labor attaché to Israel Teresita Manzala.

Roque said that among the second batch of evacuees who arrived Tuesday night, there were three sick OFWs—one of hepatitis while two others from supposed psychological trauma.

"Our people in our labor office in Israel have already been implementing our contingency plan in the event that the Hezbollah offensive on Israel escalates and becomes widespread," Brion added.

Safety measures in Israel

The latest barrage of Hezbollah rockets reportedly landed near the northern Israeli cities of Tiberias, Kiryat Shmona, Maalot, Nahariya and north of Haifa.

The secretary also said he had alerted labor attachés in countries surrounding Israel and Lebanon to closely monitor the developments in the armed conflict to be able to act immediately to help in the evacuation of OFWs.

Filipino doctors from Saudi Arabia were on standby in case OFWs would need medical assistance, he added.

Manzala said the Philippine Overseas Labor Office based in Tel Aviv, Israel, had taken the precautionary measure of registering OFWs in northern Israel to secure their safety.

Text-brigade system

Brion said while most OFWs in Israel were working far from the conflict in the country's north and not deemed in immediate danger, the measures are necessary to ensure the OFWs' safety.

According to the POEA, there are 5,121 documented OFWs in Israel as of last year.

Manzala said the OFWs were told to register through e-mail, telephone/short messaging system, and as walk-in clients.

A "text-brigade system" set by POLO and the Philippine Embassy has also been set up. A hotline number and other contact facilities in Haifa and its vicinities were also in place, she said.

Counseling system

Embassy officials have also activated an advisory and counseling system for the OFWs to assist them to remain calm and minimize the risk of being injured," she said.

POLO also maintains regular linkages with legitimate manpower agencies to ensure the welfare and safety of OFWs. No ban is in place for Israel-bound workers and the processing of employment contracts continues, she said. With a report from Nikko Dizon

RP flag on belt

mmigration y waited for quino Inter-

ed out of a a few boldly have pho- m. Pineda, obliged. But be whisked snapshots, ed ankle.

ictims

ncert was al- ctims of the

be mounted in Manila in recent months. Viva Concerts reportedly shelled out P30 million.

In a statement, Viva said a huge portion of the budget had gone to transporting the huge set "and more than a million dollars' worth of state-of-the-art sound and light equipment." The Peas had brought their own musicians and dancers as well.

Pineda said the Filipino fans were well worth it. "We've always had a good welcome here in the Philippines," he pointed out. "It feels good to perform in front of an audience that embraces us so strongly."

Palace to OFWs staying put: You're on your own

FILIPINOS WHO DECIDE TO STICK IT OUT IN Lebanon would have to fend for themselves if Israel steps up its attack on southern Lebanon, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said.

He expected the number of Filipino evacuees flown to Manila from Lebanon to reach 1,170 by Aug. 2.

This is just 4 percent of the estimated 30,000 Filipinos in Lebanon who had been advised by President Macapagal-Arroyo to evacuate because of Israel's plans of more missile bombings and the expansion of its ground assault.

"Those who decide to stay will have to be on their own. We all know that some Filipinos would decide to try their luck and stay especially if they hear that the problem would be resolved in 10 days. They would stay there even if they are hungry because they are probably looking for opportunities once the fighting stops," said Ermita.

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Dreams

EDITORIAL

HOW MUCH WILL IT COST TO CRANK UP THE four "super regions" with which she envisions to tow the entire country on the "path to prosperity"? President Macapagal-Arroyo was not telling, but in her State of the Nation Address last Monday, she assured everyone there is money for everything. There are "funds to address social inequity," she said, "funds to stamp out terrorism and lawless violence," funds to fight graft and corruption, funds to change the Constitution and reform the electoral system, and funds to carry out many ambitious projects that she vowed to finish within the remaining three years, 11 months and six days (now down to four) of her presidency. These projects include the construction all over the country of ports and airports, dams and irrigation systems, power plants, roads and bridges and just about anything and everything any Filipino could wish for.

The projects Ms Arroyo rattled off were so many and so grand that some people were left wondering how she intended to finance them all. Senate President Manuel Villar said he liked the plans but wasn't clear about how they were to be funded. Benjamin Diokno, a UP economics professor and former President Joseph Estrada's budget secretary, estimated that government would have to raise P500 billion to carry out the plans outlined by Ms Arroyo and said he doubted if the government could raise that kind of money.

Albay Rep. Joey Salceda, chair of the House committee on appropriations, had a much higher estimate of the total cost—P1.02 trillion—but he said the government could easily come up with the amount. With the expanded value-added tax and "behaved" Bureau of Customs and Bureau of Internal Revenue, he said, the government could "readily finance" the P1.02-trillion infrastructure construction program, he said. And Congress wouldn't even have to pass new tax measures, he added.

Maybe, the Filipino people should just wish Salceda and Ms Arroyo, his college mentor, the best of luck. Even Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya Jr. didn't sound too sure about the government's capacity to finance the administration's infrastructure program, saying not all the funds would come from the national government. "Government-owned and -controlled corporations will also have to pitch in," Andaya said.

True, the BIR and Customs have been hitting, and sometimes exceeding, their collection targets. Andaya has noted that higher tax yields allowed the government to generate a P12-billion surplus during the first half of the year, instead of a P15-billion deficit. The Department of Finance has also reported that VAT collections from January to May reached P29.7 billion, 24 percent higher than the target for the period. But under the VAT law, 70 percent of the money collected from the VAT should be used to reduce the deficit, and only the remainder can be spent on infrastructure and basic services. In fact, according to Andaya, the proposed 2007 budget will allocate only P10 billion for the projects Ms Arroyo mentioned in her speech. Which would leave still more than P1 trillion worth of projects crying for funding from 2008 to 2010. So even assuming that the BIR and Customs will achieve their combined VAT collection target of P80 billion for this year as well as their targets for the succeeding years, the Arroyo administration will still need a lot of fund-raising to do.

Instead of oozing with money as the President was saying, the true state of the nation borders on penury. As of April this year, the national government's debt was very close to P4 trillion. Throw in the debts of government corporations, and the total public sector debt goes up to about P6 trillion.

Because of its mounting debt, the government's debt payments has been rising, too—from P470 billion in 2003, to P581 billion in 2004, P674 billion in 2005 and P721 billion this year. Former Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Cielito Habito has noted that debt servicing took out P3 of every P4 of government revenue in 2003, P4 out of every P5 in 2004, and P9 out of every P10 last year. This year, it's back to P3 out of every P4, but that still means the government has to borrow heavily not only to pay off its debts but just to stay in business.

This situation isn't going to change overnight. And that leaves the government with very little leeway to improve and expand the delivery of basic services and even much less to undertake a massive infrastructure construction program. But the administration can dream on. That's for free, anyway.

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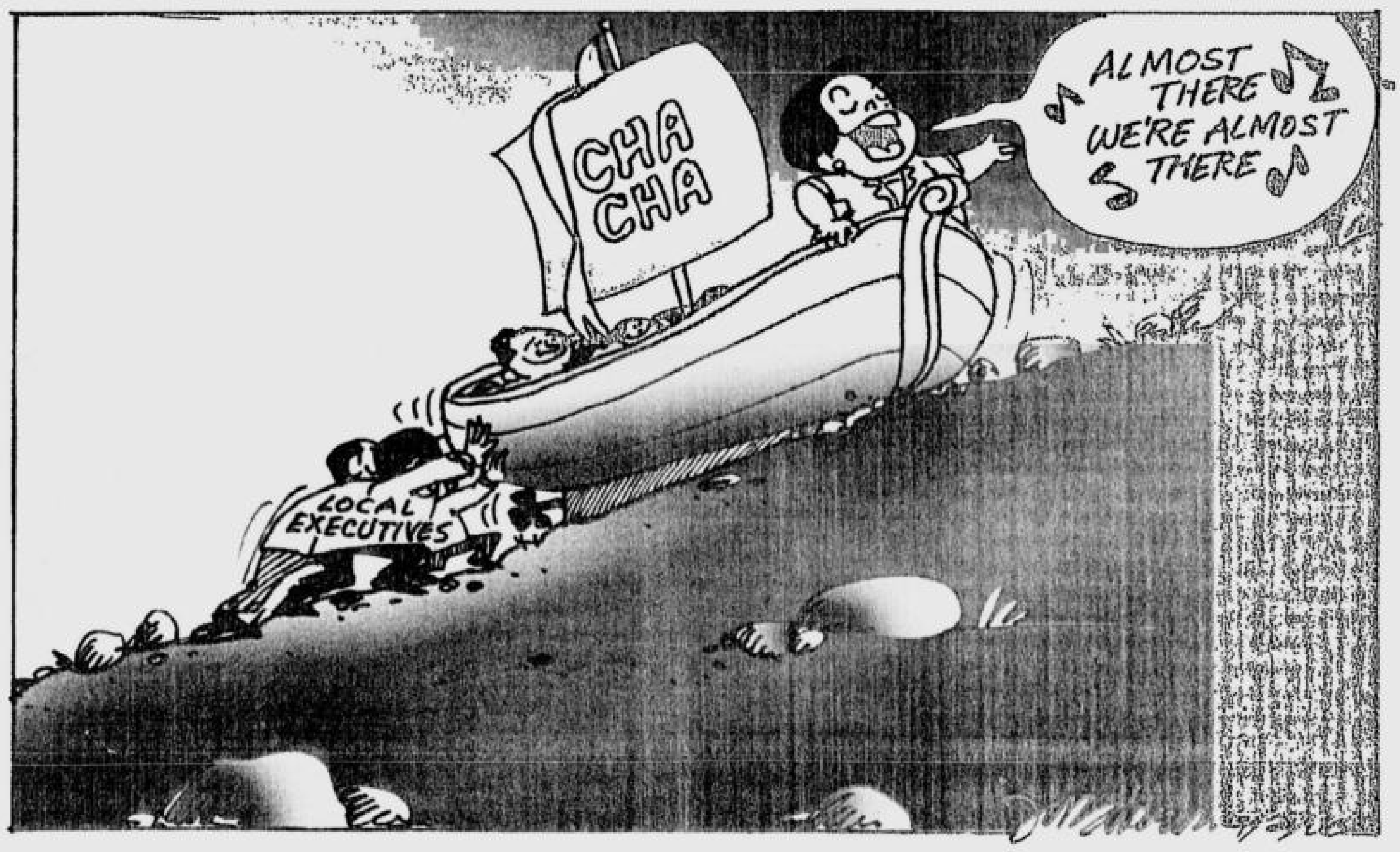
CHA CHA
ALMOST THERE WE'RE ALMOST THERE
LOCAL EXECUTIVES

The morning after

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

IT'S "THE MORNING AFTER" PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo's slick State of the Nation Address. The typhoon hosed down protestors to a fourth of what they mustered last year. And Malacañang can barely conceal its euphoria.

It'd be useful to recall the 1974 TV show: "The Morning After." This Emmy Award-nominated play spun off this phrase into daily language. It may have a point for us.

The play depicted a successful public relations executive who didn't admit his alcoholism. After soused binges, he'd run smack into reality. Inaction ravaged, first his family, then his career.

PR fluff, whether Palace-choreographed cheers or opposition stalkouts, dissipates before harsh national problems. In "the morning after" Sona, the only currency that trades is performance.

Everyone has ideas on what would dissipate skepticism of a people worn to the bone by endless political bickering. Here are a few:

Overhaul a Commission on Elections that handcuffed over 40 million of us to primitive manual voting in the last polls and whose garbled registration lists disenfranchised thousands.

The Supreme Court shredded a P6.5-billion contract for ID cards with Photokina Marketing Corp. that Commissioner Luzviminda Tancangco peddled. In a 9-3-2 vote, the Court found sleazy the P849,167,169 purchase of flawed computers from Mega Pacific.

For starters, the President can implement former Supreme Court Chief Justice Hilario Davide's reform recommendations. It should be sooner rather than later. Because reports persist that Ms Arroyo may name Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos ambassador to Germany. With Mega Pacific, Photokina and other charges pending, that guarantees another Garcillano-style scam.

When Simeon Marcelo resigned as Ombudsman, he took his spine along. That was unfortunate. Because his successor badly needs one. The Supreme Court had to jog her into acting on the Mega Pacific deal. And inexplicably, the Ombudsman fingered only Commissioner Resurreccion Borra for en banc commission decisions. Was that in deference to an incoming ambassador?

The Ombudsman is independent of the executive. But we were not born yesterday. The President can signal in many ways her respect for that independence. That'd reduce the Ombudsman's groveling—and more importantly, ensure justice.

The President denounced the salvaging of journalists and activists. Thank you, Madame. Assassination remains the ultimate censorship.

Was Marlene Esperat victim No. 71? Mindanews photo editor Gene Boyd Lumawag was victim No. 58. Did that make Mohamad Yusuf of Islamic Broadcasting No. 36? Or did that slot belong to Dipolog's Press Freedom Weekly Ferdinand Reyes? In this macabre treadmill, it's easy to lose track.

Has any mastermind been convicted? That's the only thing that will dismantle today's culture of impunity. Until then, the President's denunciations mean little. "Words, words, words," Hamlet snapped.

"Coups for Rent" is one of this troubled country's newer businesses. In the failed Magdalo coup, some people bankrolled polished combat boots, radios, embroidered armbands, airline tickets, plus brand-new vans, later abandoned. In the Feb. 26 "standoff" (a.k.a. *golpe*), others picked up the bill for TV productions of "withdrawal of support" statements, etc.

"Hot money" sloshes in this town. National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales claims that 20 citizens funneled funds into the aborted Feb. 26 coup. But a *golpe* that turns sour is an orphan. "The morning after" saw "financiers" trot in. Not content to wash their hands, they insisted on publicly pledging fealty to the constitutional order.

Joseph Estrada didn't pick up the mutiny tab, claimed the Magdalos, many of them Philippine Military Academy graduates. "Our idealism is not for hire." Brig. Gen. Danny Lim, Scout Rangers, Marines chorus that, too.

These officers and gentlemen only proved President Manuel L. Quezon was right in being wary of the military in politics. He sought to deny "control of the nation's arsenals to established political elites, whether nationalist lawyers from UP or corporate executives from Ateneo," notes the Yale University study, "Closer Than Brothers." He, therefore, established a corps of professional officers.

Despite persistence of the coup virus, Quezon's insight is holding. "A tentative belief in civil supremacy and military professionalism somehow survived" in the military, the study adds. All surveys indicate near zero support for "saviors" in coup-for-hire disruptions. A swift resolution of court martial cases and implementation of reforms in the Davide, Feliciano and Lopez reports are called for.

The opposition, meanwhile, will continue to be marginalized if it cannot produce new untainted leaders. No one will take the opposition seriously if its chairman emeritus says his name is Joseph Estrada one day and Jose Velarde the next.

And building a nation will call for more than just sniping by the opposition. We'd like, for example, to see if the opposition can stitch to the P166.4 billion allocation for Internal Revenue Allotments performance criteria. Funds must be matched with delivery—and transparency.

And what about holding the administration to account for lagging in bringing bloated government-owned and controlled corporations to heel? Thirty of them racked up P140.2 billion in losses in just one year. A lean and mean government machine is needed if those "five super regions" and the Cyber Corridor are to get off the starting block.

Sa gawa lamang makikilala ang kamahalan, the old Tagalog proverb says. "By deeds alone is nobility known."

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Impressions from a brochure

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

THE DEMONSTRATORS FOUGHT OFF RAIN, the hostile presence of riot cops and the smug indifference of the cows, also called GMA's allies, being fattened inside the Batasan. I sympathized with them mightily not merely because I shared their sentiments and cause, but also because I too had to fight off something heroically. I had to fight off sleep.

The only reason I couldn't do something else was that I had committed to comment on GMA's speech on ABC 5. That wasn't a speech, that was a brochure. A brochure such as you may find in the Department of Tourism, with its idyllic and completely hyperbolic description of the lay of the land. The brochure is more interesting. It keeps you awake.

I seriously wondered if GMA hadn't discovered a new offensive strategy, which was to bore people to death. That is by no means completely facetious or metaphorical. I took a lot of coffee to keep myself from falling into Morpheus' embrace and frayed my nerves that night.

At the end of my mighty struggle, I came away with several impressions. A coherent response was not what that brochure provoked.

My first impression was hearing all over again the "Hello Garci" tape. That was so not just because it was the same unique DNA-imprinted voice being conscripted for pretty much the same reason, which was to put the wool over the public's eyes. It was also because the speaker showed the same passion for micromanagement. It answers the question of why she personally called up Garci with a persistence that tried the patience of Garci himself, rather than had a minion do it for her, thus giving her space for deniability. She just had to sink to that level.

My second impression while looking at the reporters and announcers at the Batasan being besieged by wind and rain, their hair tousled furiously this way and that, was that God was making a comment on the proceedings. I remembered that shortly before that, GMA had just repeated her favorite line which was that God put her there. The real God, who is not Garci, must have heard, and decided to send a storm at least, if not a thunderbolt, in her direction. The caption that rose in my mind at the scene at the Batasan was: "A lot of wind."

My third impression was that GMA's intro in her Sona showed exactly what was wrong with it. The Sona would later turn out to be a division of spoils, or a sharing of loot with her favorite allies under the guise of breaking the stranglehold of "imperial Manila." Or at least it was a **promise** of a division of spoils or sharing of loot. I don't know if the congressmen or congresswomen bit into it hook, line and sinker, but they seemed to be a gullible lot. The collective IQ of most of the people there could not have exceeded the speaker's weight. As newly elected Senate President Manuel Villar would say later on, they seemed ready to applaud anything. The image that leaped to mind was a live comedy show where the props-people intermittently and frequently raised signs before the audience that said, "Laughter" and "Applause."

But as I was saying, GMA began her speech by talking (all too briefly) about the plight of the OFWs in Lebanon. It reminded me of Fr. Agustin Advincula's plaintive cry about where the OFW billions have gone. You have P7.6 billion Owwa cash reserves and you have P100 billion in savings, and you can spare only P150 million to evacuate an entire horde of Filipinos trapped in a war-torn country? And give the rest—or at least promise to do so—to loyal lieutenants. Punish the "modern heroes" and reward the modern heels? Story of this nation's life.

My fourth impression was that, then as now, GMA has a habit of crediting herself for all the good that happens in this country and exculpating herself from all the bad in it. At one point, she even took credit for Jollibee putting up a place in Basilan. But what did she say when it came to the killings? "I condemn the political killings in the strongest terms." And she went on to cajole the witnesses to come out and testify.

That is not unlike saying, "I condemn crime in the strongest terms." But, madam, it is precisely the task of government to stop crime and extra-judicial killings. It is precisely the task of government to create the climate that stops crime and extra-judicial killings. When they happen, and to the extent they do today, government is to blame as surely as the direct authors of these crimes themselves. You are to blame as surely as if you pulled the trigger yourself. The inability to stop these things by itself voids your claim to existence. What are you saying—these things are the fault of the witnesses who do not come out to damn them? Government is excused if they never do so?

Acsa Ramirez came out to tell what she knew, and look what you did to her. Francisco Gudani and Alexander Balutan came out to tell what they knew, and look what you did to them.

My fifth impression was déjà vu. GMA ended her speech by saying: "After three years, 11 months, and six days, I shall relinquish the presidency, with much if not all that I have outlined completed." Three years, six months, and 24 days before, that was nearly exactly what she said too: "If we achieve these, my successor as president will be in a good position to lead the Philippines through the next decisive steps for the strong and modern society." She said that in her (in)famous speech about not running again and instead leaving her successor a nice legacy. She never had a successor. She ran again and stole the elections.

Ask yourself seriously: Will she really relinquish her position in 2010? Indeed, will she ever do?

That brings me to my last, and lasting, impression. Be afraid. Be very, very afraid.

Survival of our 'one and only country'

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO HAS THREE and a half years to make good the vow she made at her State of the Nation Address last Monday—which was to end social inequity, economic disparity and injustice in the country through successful economic reforms. GMA may not be popular, but many citizens believe she has the vision, the intelligence and good work habits to achieve these goals. The question is: Would her political opponents give her the time and peace to achieve this promise?

* * *

Judging by the record, time and peace may be hard to come by. Since she assumed power in 2001, the opposition has been determined to remove her by fair or foul means. Failing that, it may now seek to thwart her economic goals of righting the deep social and economic divisions in the country, by torpedoing the funding she needs to rev up the countryside economy. The opposition's instrument: the budget. As we saw in the proposed P1.05 trillion budget for 2006, which got stymied in the bicameral conference committee, among the items the senators cut was P64 billion that could have directly addressed poverty and economic upliftment. The amount covered the P5-billion Kilos Asenso fund for local government units, the P1.7-billion fund allocating one kilo of rice per week per public school student, and the Kalayaan Barangay fund.

Perhaps in the new administration of Senate President Manuel Villar, we might see a more reasonable Senate that would see the imperative of restoring these badly needed countryside funds for development.

* * *

In her Sona, GMA stressed that the country has achieved "record collections," thanks to the BIR and Customs, fiscal discipline and billions of dollars in annual interest savings. These funds are now ready for "necessary public investments." To spur development, the President has identified four economic "super-regions:" the Northern Luzon Agribusiness Quadrangle, the Metro Luzon Urban Beltway (which presumably includes the Subic-Clark corridor as well as the industrial areas near Metro Manila, such as Bulacan, Cavite, Batangas and Laguna), Central Philippines (which includes the three regions of the Visayas), and Mindanao and the "Cyber Corridor." The latter presumably includes all the areas where call centers and related businesses have been set up—such as Metro Manila, Angeles City, Baguio, Dumaguete and Cagayan de Oro.

In these "super-regions," investments worth about P1 trillion are expected to be sunk into new infrastructure projects—roads, ports, airports and power plant installations, all of which will create new jobs and spur development. This early, however, some politicians are concerned that their areas may be left behind as the gravy train steams full speed ahead. This will be inevitable for a while: some regions will have to be more super than others. But it is hoped that everything would even out as total progress for the entire country.

* * *

To understand the new economic rationale, recall the explanation made in our dzRH program by Albay Rep. Joey Salceda, GMA's economic adviser, about how increased spending triggers growth. As he noted, a growth of more than 2 percent of GDP immediately rescues more than 500,000 families from poverty. Citing China, he pointed out that it has successfully liberated 800 million of its people from abject poverty, and 90 percent of its success was due to economic growth. Of course, China has to liberate over 400 million more in the countryside.

* * *

In her Sona, GMA stressed that in the first three years of her administration, the incomes of the poorest families increased by 30 percent, while the number of poor families dropped from 28 percent to 25 percent. This means two million families have been rescued from poverty. But much needs to be done. RP needs more infrastructure investments to spur economic growth—especially so, considering that a recent World Bank study ranked RP 59th out of 60 nations surveyed on infrastructure competitiveness. In years past, largely because of gaping budgetary deficits, RP spent only 4 percent of GDP in infrastructure investment, as against, say, Vietnam's 8 percent.

GMA has promised to lead the country into economic development, but she needs political peace and our people's cooperation to be able to do the job. Last Monday, her challenge to the opposition was clear: "Why not join hands instead in the biggest challenge of all, where we all win, or we all lose the battle for the survival and progress of our one and only country?"

* * *

The resolution of the case of former PNP officer Michael Ray Aquino in the US was definitely the result of bargaining behind the scenes. Aquino pleaded guilty to unauthorized possession of US defense documents passed on to him by a Filipino-American White House staffer, Leandro Aragoncillo. But his lawyer denied that he had passed them on to anyone else. The US court accepted Aquino's plea and denial and enabled him to avoid an espionage charge. As a result, he got a light sentence of only 10 years, instead of life imprisonment. But the court's move was obviously to spare the US from having to bare the weakness of its security system in the highest places—which would have resulted from a prolonged espionage trial. It was also a political move: spared from involvement in a conspiracy charge were Aquino's former bosses, now Sen. Panfilo Lacson and former President Estrada.

There is, however, a fact that Aquino's admission and conviction have not settled. This is, that a lowly character like him obviously couldn't have acted on his own as his lawyer had argued. For what need would he have to get those documents if not to pass them on to those who thought they could use them?

'u.g.'

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

JUST OUT OF THE PRESSES IS "U.G.: AN Underground Tale" by Benjamin Pimentel. It is about "the journey of Edgar Jopson and the First Quarter Storm Generation."

More than 15 years ago, Pimentel came out with a book on Jopson, the young leftist leader in the underground movement who was shot and killed while being chased by the military. Two editions have since been printed but Pimentel, feeling that more needed to be told, recently came out with a more complete story. And so "u.g.", the book, emerged from the underground, so to speak.

For total political innocents, UG means underground, or that political movement (armed and unarmed) that operated clandestinely at that time and worked toward revolutionary change in society. It was therefore considered a threat to the status quo. Its members were called subversives by the establishment. That is my loose definition of it. The definition still applies today.

"UG" is now part of the leftist jargon, like "mob" (for mobilization), "PO," "CS," "DPA," "H," "*kasams*," "*oryentasion*," to name a few. (Hey, someone should do a compilation of the "undergroundspeak" of the martial law era.)

Anyway, "u.g." still tells the same story of a young man from a rich family, educated at the Ateneo, who gave up his life of privilege in order to pursue his dream of helping the poor and the powerless by struggling to change the oppressive structures in society. That was what the old edition "Edjop: The Unusual Journey of Edgar Jopson" was about. What "Edjop" did not have, "u.g." now has. "u.g." includes the nuances of Edjop's struggle.

Pimentel sent me an e-mail from San Francisco saying: "For example, I found out that Edjop was aware of and was seriously disturbed by the allegations that the movement was responsible for the Plaza Miranda bombing. Also the names of some of the characters are now included, so it is now easier to follow the story. In the first book, I could not even use the real UG names at the request of the interview subjects."

Pimentel's "u.g." has an afterword by Gloria (Joy) A. Jopson-Kintanar, the widow of Jopson, and herself once part of the underground. Joy later married another communist underground bigwig, Rolando Kintanar. They were both captured and briefly jailed in the 1990s. Kintanar was later assassinated by his own communist comrades.

"u.g." also has a main foreword by former Sen. Jovito R. Salonga, himself a victim of the Plaza Miranda bombing, plus another foreword (by Edicio de la Torre) and another afterword by Ramsey Clark, both from "u.g.'s" other former incarnation ("Rebolusyon: A Generation of Struggle").

I tell you, this book keeps evolving and reincarnating. Well, more and more information are finding their way above ground, shedding light on so many things that were once in the dark or rarely spoken about.

The book is instructive for both political virgins and die-hard ideologues as it traces Edjop's transformation from being a student activist to a communist cadre and revolutionary. But this is not just one person's story. As Jose "Pete" Lacaba notes, "This is not just the biography of one person; it is the history of a generation."

Indeed, as one follows the personal life of Jopson, one also reads about political developments, debates, skirmishes, decisions and movements around him and in the underground that make their impact above ground. As these are played out, the characters take on real faces and personalities—and, as Pimentel said, in this latest edition, he was able to give real names.

Pimentel deftly tells the story and keeps it moving with incidents, dialogues and debates between persons. He also does not fail to tell humorous and touching anecdotes that say a lot about the characters, Jopson especially.

Here are excerpts that I picked randomly:

His friends called Edjop "Charlie Brown," after the wide-eyed comic strip kid who was always thinking of ways to improve the world…

* * *

"Do you know of Christians who joined the Communist Party?" he asked. "How did they resolve their belief in God?"

De la Torre said he knew quite a few. "But I said for the most part their belief in God was not the principal question. When they were invited to the Party, the CPP did not ask them first if they believe in God or not. For a lot of them, those who believed continued believing, and those who didn't believe did not find any reason to assert that."

"Edjop did not pick up the question too much," De la Torre recalled. "But occasionally I would catch him at other meetings, look at me with a bit of a question. I also gave him some materials to read. The whole issue of religious belief in a revolutionary movement, particularly in a Communist movement which includes atheists, is a very difficult question …. But it is ultimately a very personal question. I don't know how Edjop resolved it, or whether he felt any need to resolve it."

* * *

Aling Osang's newest "relative" was called Gusting. San Roque's residents could see that he was definitely not of the New People's Army—not a *gerilya* …. He was also too clumsy to be a *gerilya*. He often stumbled while walking on the levees. Gusting was not much of a farmer either. He planted the seedlings too close to each other."

Published by Anvil, "u.g." is now in bookstores. Author Benjamin Pimentel is a graduate of the Ateneo, UP and the University of California in Berkeley. He works at the San Francisco Chronicle and is coanchor of "Balitang America" on the Filipino channel.

(Send feedback to cerespd@info.com.ph)

Rootin' tootin' regime

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

THERE'S SUPPOSEDLY A CAR RENTAL BROchure from Tokyo that has this amusing example of English: "When passenger of foot heave in sight, tootle the horn. Trumpet him melodiously at first, but if he still obstacles your passage then tootle him vigorously." The administration does this, trying to charm the critical with the melodious *ka-ching! ka-ching!* of cash and other financial instruments, and then vigorously tootling its opponents (and if all fails and the enemy is a provincial yokel, it lets off a rat-tat-tat of ordinance).

At her recent Sona, President Macapagal-Arroyo certainly did enough melodious trumpeting and vigorous tootling to last a lifetime. The tuba-like braying of her critics naturally ensued, although if you ask the Palace (even if you don't, it'll respond, anyway), the opposition is pure *piccolo*.

Still, whoever occupies the presidency, whether de facto or de jure, has the immense power of setting the national agenda, and the agenda was "PowerPointed" for all to see. Planes, trains and automobiles: who can question it, much less oppose it? We Filipinos are among the greatest draftsmen of the world; our plans are always a delight to behold. And I think it's important to consider that many of the schemes included in this latest blueprint, are products of many months, if not years, of consultation and combined planning. Therefore, in one way or another, they can, and should, be implemented.

The scholar Mina Roces once proposed that an important element of Philippine politics—aside from actual patronage—is the politico's ability to appear "*malakas*," that is, someone who has the ear of higher-ups. In this sense, a little rootin' tootin' tootling from the Palace helps.

This year, at least, Ms Arroyo seemed convinced about what she was discussing—and, therefore, looked more convincing.

It is much easier to convince someone of something, if you yourself are convinced about what it is you're advocating. Ms Arroyo, back when she still enjoyed the presumption of legitimacy, once met with the INQUIRER editors. When she began discussing one of the genuine achievements of her administration—the Strong Republic nautical highway—she became more relaxed, confident and she impressed a pretty hard-boiled audience with her capacity to recall facts, tying them together according to her Atlas-like knowledge of our geography. This was at a time when the organ grinders at the Palace were cranking out fabulously futile attempts to portray their principal as cuddly, caring and possessed of a great vision. Their efforts fell flat; for Ms Arroyo is like William Pitt (the younger) in the film, "The Madness of King George."

In one scene, the opposition head, Mr. Burke, playfully asks the cold and clinical prime minister, "Is there anything at all that you love, Mr. Pitt?" To which the stone-faced Pitt replies, "A balance sheet, Mr. Burke: I love a good balance sheet." This kind of love—for numbers, charts, graphs, blueprints and public works allocations—is shared by many who continue to support Ms Arroyo. As Rep. Joey Salceda said after listening to her speech: he would have preferred it if it had gone into even greater detail.

As our society assumes an even greater technocratic orientation—preferring PowerPoint to the mental exertion required of listening to a speech devoid of visual aids, or reading reports or essays not in the form of bullet points—the idea that leaders can inspire, not by appealing to ideals and non-scientific principles will increase. And it is precisely when Ms Arroyo speaks of such things—that of themselves are as much a respectable means for trying to make sense of the challenges of the present as any other—that I can't help but think, if only she weren't stuck under a cloud of legitimacy.

But she is. And under such a cloud she remains.

In politics and, indeed, in any human activity, legitimacy is essential. It is non-negotiable; otherwise you end up making the ironic argument that at least Mussolini made the trains run on time in Italy; that Hitler gave Germany the autobahn and the Volkswagen Beetle; or that Stalin, regardless of his purges built dams according to five-year plans; while Mao meant well when he launched the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution. According to that framework, Pol Pot was simply a misunderstood man trying to achieve agricultural self-sufficiency.

Now some will say—unfair! It is wrong to appeal to the monsters of the past to vilify Ms Arroyo. She can never be so monstrous. To adopt this line of thought is to ignore the monstrosity of what is being committed: brainwashing a country into thinking it is a virtue to defy demands for accountability.

The Indonesians, after the excesses of Suharto, staggered through a series of uninspiring and even inept leaders: Habibie, Wahid, Sukarnoputri. They decided to fix the infirmities of the presidency by establishing run-off elections to ensure a firm and unquestionable mandate (they reportedly examined the Philippines to figure out how not to establish a self-defeating government). The result is Yodhoyono who is being called the Ramon Magsaysay of Indonesia.

An election isn't worth the paper a congressional proclamation of winning candidates is printed on, if the election is viewed as having been bought or as fatally flawed by cheating. The Thais from their king on down know this: they nullified the last one, and have begun rounding up and locking up members of their own version of the Comelec. They are in the process of investigating—and potentially disqualifying from future elections—political parties accused of either bending or actually breaking election rules.

We should be as lucky as the Thais and Indonesians.

Boorish people

YOUNG BLOOD

Frances Anne A. Suico

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

I WAS IN A TAXI QUEUE IN A MALL, WAITING AT THE END of the line for a ride home, when a man who seemed to be in his 50s stood behind me. When a cab finally came, the man left the line and talked to the driver, not minding the 10 or more people in front of him. We were all protesting as he opened the door and called his companions. As he passed us, he mumbled something about a sick companion. I expected to see someone in a wheelchair or in crutches, but he came back with two healthy women carrying their own plastic bag. As the taxi [illegible] the girls ahead of me said they had overheard the man telling the driver he was a *balikbayan* from the United States.

How inconsiderate of him. The queue and the railings were there to keep everything in order. The whole set-up practically screams "First come, first served." If that man wanted to get ahead of everybody else, he shouldn't have gone where people had to fall in line. He just had to take a few steps to another place where he could have competed with others in hailing a taxi. Organized Filipinos fall in line to get a taxi after going to the mall. No matter how long it takes to get one, we wait for our turn. If he could not follow a simple rule like that, he should have stayed in America.

That reminded me of a similar incident that a family friend told us about. When she visited New York last summer, she bumped into an old college friend whom she had not seen for a long time. She greeted her friend and asked her if they could get together some time. Instead of responding nicely, the friend brushed her off, saying, "We have different lives now. I have my own set of new friends and you should have yours, too."

That story made me wonder if some of my closest high school friends who are now studying abroad are going to do the same thing when I see them again. I certainly hope not.

I also know this teenager who came from the province and went to Quezon City for college with the help of a relative. He thought that being one of the few students from his hometown who were able to go to college in the big city made him cool. Instead of doing chores assigned to him, he would work out while his *tito* slept. Lifting weights didn't just blow up his body, but his ego as well.

When his *tito* bought a new motorcycle, he was told that he could use it as soon as he got a student's permit. Two days later the uncle had to leave on a business trip and reminded him not to ride the motorcycle yet. But the guy's desire to show off prevailed and he rode the day-old motorcycle to school. When his *tito* came back, he learned about it and prohibited the young man from using it for a month. Again, the nephew ignored the warning and drove the motorcycle around the subdivision while his *tito* was at work.

When he went home for the summer vacation, it was clear that he had changed a lot. He would drink and smoke outside of his *lola's* house. He advised his younger brother, who was about to start college, not to enroll in a nautical course because he was already into it (as if he was sure he would finish the course). So his brother ended up deciding to take another course, although an aunt who got wind of it was able to persuade him to take the course he wanted.

He would drive another *tito's* motorcycle around town shirtless. One time he asked permission from his *lola* to use the motorcycle. Thinking he would just use it to ride around town, the *lola* allowed him to take it. Instead, he went to another province.

I am not generalizing when I talk about this kind of people. But I don't like the bad image they create for us Filipinos. I want to tell them—and all other people like them—a thing or two.

To the teenager: You should have learned your lesson by now. You were given a big opportunity, but instead of showing your gratitude, you showed your bad side, the side that no one would want to help or support now or in the future. Deflate your ego, quit your vices. They won't do you any good. Study instead of showing off. That will change your family's impression of you. And please, keep your shirt on. To tell you honestly, the girls don't like to see you flaunt your body, no matter how buffed you think you are. It's the attitude that counts.

To the college friend (if you really are a friend): You can live in another country and find new friends, but that doesn't give you the right to hurt an old friend's feelings. Making new friends doesn't mean you can't keep the old. But if you don't want to hang out with them anymore, tell them so nicely. Honesty is good, but you can be honest without being rude.

To the *balikbayan*: Being able to fly to the States and back does not exempt you from following rules when you are in your own country. When you're in the Philippines, follow the rules in the Philippines. Being a *balikbayan* does not entitle you to look only after your own convenience. That doesn't give you special privileges. We are equal, no matter where we've gone or what we've done. It's that simple.

What about other Pinoys out there? Do you think that going abroad or moving and studying in the big city makes you superior to those who can't? I don't think so. Being able to travel gives you new experiences that you can share (not brag about) with those who can't go where you've gone. I know a lot of people who have gone to a lot of places but still keep their feet on the ground. Fame and fortune are good to have, but they are not all that counts. Family and friends are treasures, too. The inner self is more important than the way you project yourself to other people. No, you can't eat virtue. But it doesn't mean you can do without it. If Ray-Ban shades, Gucci bags and Prada shoes can make you look fabulous, so can humility and virtue, and they don't cost you a single cent. Be good role models for the younger generations who need guidance, not bad examples.

By the way, my parents are OFWs.

Frances Anne A. Suico, 17, is a 2nd year BA Philosophy student at the University of the Philippines in Diliman.

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Abu Sayyaf and Hezbollah: incomparable terror groups

A COLUMN OF RINA JIMENEZ-David perpetuates myths on the present Middle East conflict. ("No peace at the end of this," PDI, 7/21/06) The facts are begging to be straightened out.

First, by drawing a parallel between the Abu Sayyaf and Hezbollah, David failed to observe that the latter, which has taken the whole of Lebanon as hostage, is not a mere ragtag organization. The Abu Sayyaf's incursion on Malaysian coasts cannot and should not be compared with that of Hezbollah's on Israel.

Hezbollah poses a definite border menace and is very capable of missile attacks as repeatedly shown since the Israelis moved out of Lebanon. Experts put Hezbollah's rocket force as high as 12,000 missiles, plus a massive arsenal of 8,000 Katyusha rockets from Iran. Of far greater concern to Israel than these short-range projectiles are the growing stocks of Fajr rockets, which extends Hezbollah's strike-range capability well beyond Haifa, enough to disrupt the fragile Israeli economy—if not its existence altogether.

Terrorists now have access to satellite photographs offered by Google, which enhances Hezbollah's targeting ability. Without a buffer and frontier, even an anti-rocket system will not provide Israel with an effective defense. This leaves Israel with no choice but to launch a preemptive attack.

Second, Israel's targeting of strategic infrastructure throughout Lebanon, including airports, docks, roads and bridges, is not pointless. Rather, these are reasonable military targets to deter the flow of arms supply from Iran and to prevent the group from moving the kidnapped Israeli soldiers deeper into Lebanon and beyond its borders.

We oftentimes fail to include in the picture that Hezbollah's facilities and rocket launch sites are positioned near residential areas in Beirut, taking cover under civilian populations—a ploy of terrorists. Israel has been conscionable and dropped leaflets on Beirut suburbs, calling on civilians to stay away from terrorist lairs so as not to be caught up in the fighting. We should not lose sight of the effort of Israel to spare non-combatants, unlike the hundreds of Hezbollah rockets, which are deliberately aimed at Israeli civilians.

Lastly, the Lebanese government is accountable to what has escalated to a full-blown crisis. UN Security Council Resolution 1559 of September 2004 calls "for the disbanding and disarmament of militias in Lebanon"; and supports "the extension of the control of the government of Lebanon over all Lebanese territory." However, the Lebanese government has not disarmed Hezbollah, neither has it sent its armed forces to secure southern Lebanon and the border with Israel.

Instead, Hezbollah became part of the Lebanese government, which includes two Hezbollah members in the Cabinet and controls 10 percent of the seats in the National Assembly. The Lebanese government cannot simply wash its hands for the deeds of a part of its leadership.

—MICHAEL BASILIO,
Mount Zion Center,
jitleileb04@yahoo.com.ph

Ways to 'follow up' GSIS loans and benefits

WE TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY to clarify the issue in Delfin Mallari Jr.'s article about the GSIS Lucena City Field Office. ("Lack of phones at GSIS," PDI, 7/8/06) More than anything else, our office's practice of minimizing power consumption is part of the national government's energy conservation program. Similarly, we have not cut telephone lines, because GSIS members can still reach us through (042)3736358.

Moreover, the GSIS has adopted a policy of enhancing our means of communication with our members. Members no longer need to call us by telephone to inquire about their GSIS records; they can instantly do this by logging on to our website (www.gsis.gov.ph). Soon there will also be the Text GSIS program, where members can text in all their GSIS queries and concerns to 4747.

We also have expedited the procedure for loans and claims applications. Gone is the usual long list of documentary requirements. Once members fill out the application forms and sign the tentative computation of proceeds, their loans and benefits will be processed within 4 and 24 hours, respectively. Faster transactions mean lesser complaints. And if they do have more complaints, we will provide them with business forms that will facilitate the follow-up of documents.

—ALEX M. VALENCERINA,
senior vice president,
Field Operations Group,
Government Service and
Insurance System

Envelope scandal reason for bishops to resign

I RECENTLY READ AN INSIGHTful letter in the Opinion section of the INQUIRER. It was written by someone whose name now escapes me. But he said that the sorry state of morality in this country is actually a reflection of a failed Church. What's more tragic is that the leaders of the Catholic Church in the Philippines don't seem to realize this. We have yet to see them doing their part to correct the situation.

Now come the "envelopes" from Malacañang. Obviously, some bishops saw nothing wrong in accepting the envelopes on the eve of their issuance of a pastoral letter on the most pressing issues facing the government.

We now know what's wrong with the Church in this country. Our Church leaders are immoral themselves. And we are not referring just to those who accepted the envelopes. We also refer to those who didn't accept their gifts from Malacañang but chose to not speak against the "generosity." The bishops who accepted the envelopes are not so naive not to know the motive for such generosity, especially considering its unholy timing.

Our bishops should all resign from their posts to preserve the integrity of the Church. Without this "act of penance," no Filipino priest or bishop can now speak against the evils of this world.

I pray that our bishops, with the usual prayer and discernment, may come to realize the damage that they have wrought upon the Church by falling prey to the lure of the "ubiquitous envelope."

—GICO DAYANGHIRANG,
78 Bacaca Rd., Barangay 19-B,
Garcia Heights,
Bajada, Davao City

LETTERS

No one to blame but RP oligarchy

THIS IS IN REFERENCE TO Ernesto Magtoto's letter, "Why the ruling elite are not keen on fighting graft and corruption," (PDI, 7/15/06) and to Isagani Cruz's column, "Just a pale copy." (PDI, 7/16/06)

Magtoto and Cruz are right on the mark, except that the "ruling elite" is really the oligarchy that has ruled this country for the past 100 years, with or without the American input. It is composed of a few hundred families that hold the Philippines in virtual servitude as though it were their personal fiefdom. These are politicians at every level, large business owners, military officers, Church officials (oh yes, even the Church has dirty hands in how the Philippines has been abused for the past 400-plus years. One cannot ignore the way the Spanish Church treated the country under its stranglehold; to do so would be to avoid the truth and continue the charade).

Cruz's mention of the phrase "little brown brothers," allegedly used by US citizens, is a term that, in my 61 years of existence, new to my eyes and ears.

For Magtoto and Cruz to be so virulent in their comments is dumbfounding. Were it not for the sacrifices of the United States and other countries, the official language of the country today would be Japanese. And those children allowed to live from 1941 onwards would have been half-Japanese. And yes, the country would have been invaded, with or without our presence.

The decision of Filipinos to worship at the altar of US decadence is an individual choice, not one inflicted or enforced on them. The choice to flee to any place but here is not a decision made by the United States for the Filipino; it is a Filipino choice, prompted by the actions of the Philippines' oligarchy.

The moral and ethical corruption in the Filipino psyche is the real problem; not what happened 60 or 360 years ago. It is hypocrisy for a person to go to Church and then walk out the door and screw anyone and everyone for anything.

This nation needs to grow up and step up to the plate in addressing its problems. For a few years, blaming everyone else was fine. Those days are gone. Other countries (including China, the Philippines' new bosom buddy) will only do to the Philippines what it will allow them to do to itself.

—LARRY WILSON,
Berniebearfedway@hotmail.com

SC reforms to solve ACID problems

THIS REFERS TO THE LETTER of Vic del Fierro Jr. ("RP justice system deserves a place in Guinness book," PDI, 7/15/06), echoing Neal H. Cruz's perception of our justice system as "the world's slowest, second to none."

It is possible that both Del Fierro and Cruz are not aware of the Supreme Court's Action Program for Judicial Reform (APJR), which is the centerpiece of Chief Justice Artemio V. Panganiban's magistracy. When he assumed office seven months ago, the Chief Justice vowed to rid the judiciary of what he called its ACID problems—access to justice by the poor, corruption, incompetence and delay in the delivery of quality judgments.

Allow me to cite some of the APJR projects whose salutary results are now being felt.

To address the problems of access to justice and delay in its delivery, the Court launched the Justice on Wheels' mobile court some time last year. Its implementation has so far resulted in fast-tracking the disposition of nearly 1,000 cases and the early release of more than 300 detainees. Two more mobile courts are soon to be deployed to other parts of the country to help decongest court dockets.

The Court is also harnessing the power of information technology to speed up case disposition and enhance the competence of the nation's judges. The computerization of courts nationwide will soon be completed. The Court's e-library has made all Supreme Court decisions and all laws enacted from the turn of the century available and retrievable at the click of a mouse. This will enable our judges to speed up court processes and render more informed decisions at a faster rate.

Chief Justice Panganiban and his colleagues in the Supreme Court have also been cracking the whip on erring and incompetent judges, court personnel and lawyers. Within the first 100 days of his tenure, six judges have been meted out disciplinary penalties, including dismissals and suspensions. A total of 16 lower court employees were similarly sanctioned for various infractions of the New Code of Judicial Conduct and the Code of Conduct for Court Personnel, including four who were dismissed from the service during that period. At the same time, 13 lawyers were either suspended or reprimanded, while one was disbarred.

The APJR has been recognized as a paragon for other judiciaries by many international institutions, including the World Bank and UNDP.

While all reform initiatives are generally expected to take time in bearing fruit, the APJR has already yielded positive results that augur well for finally putting an end to the ACID problems corroding the people's faith and confidence in our courts of law. But let me reassure the public that the Supreme Court will not be found wanting in its vigilance and determination to do right by the nation.

—ISMAEL G. KHAN JR.,
assistant court administrator
and chief,
Public Information Office,
Supreme Court,
Padre Faura, Manila

No PSALM bonus for anyone

THIS IS TO RESPOND TO AN item in Conrado Banal III's column titled "Talk is chief." (PDI, 7/18/06) Banal alleged that I, along with members of the Public Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Board "gifted themselves with P10 million of our hard-earned tax money as a bonus for the successful sale of Masinloc."

This is an outright lie. I never received any single centavo of the alleged "P10 million bonus"; neither did any PSALM board member.

My stand on stricter and more stringent limits to cross-ownership between the distribution and generation sectors stems from my concern to reduce the cost of power and give relief to the consumers who have long suffered the high cost of power. I hope Banal will support this effort.

I will appreciate it if Banal would refrain from unfair personal innuendos and stick to the facts of the case. I hope he will clarify this in fairness to myself and members of the PSALM board.

—ROMULO L. NERI,
secretary, National Economic
and Development Authority

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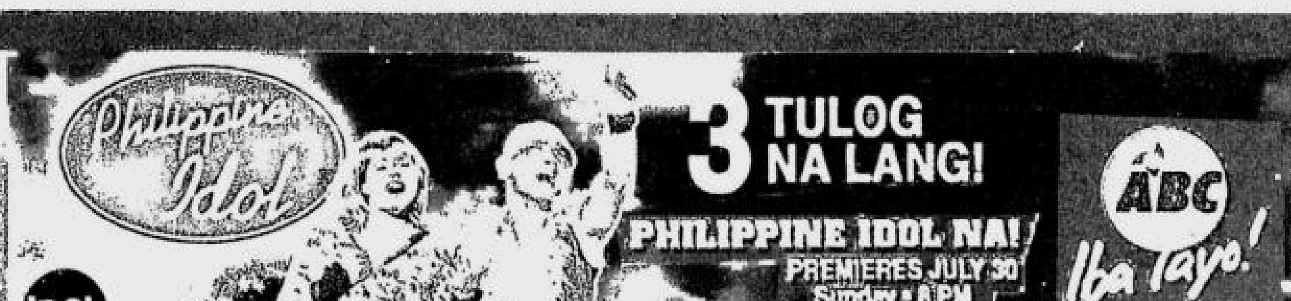
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
TV GUIDE
Thursday, July 27, 2006



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Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABC 5				National Geographic	MVP Cup				Sentro	Worst Case Scenario	S.O.S		Wala Yan Sa Lolo Ko		Big News	Dokyu			
ABS-CBN 2	Kapamilya Cinema			Pasion de Amor	Little Amy	Mr. Bean	Naruto	Calla Lily	TV Patrol World		Kapamilya Deal Or No Deal	Bituing Walang Ningning	Sa Piling Mo	My Girl		A Love To Kill		Bandila	
AXN		CSI: Crime Scene Investigation (Season 6)		CSI: Miami (Season 3)		30 Seconds To Fame	Samsung Sports World	Pensacola (Season III)		The Amazing Race 8		Fear Factor (Season VI)		The Contender (Season II)		Supernatural (Season I)		Hex (Season 2)	
Cartoon Network	Pixie And Dixie	All New Popeye Show	Tom & Jerry Show	Baby Looney Tunes	Winx Club	Xiaolin Showdown	Codename: Kids Next Door	Foster's Home For Imaginary Friends	The Simpsons	Samurai Jack	PokeMon	Dos	Gundam Seed Destiny	The Simpsons	Teen Titans	Justice League	The Batman	X-Men Evolution	Static Shock
Cinema One		Captain Barbell				Luda				Luv Text				Wala Nang Iibigin Pang Iba				Istokwa	
Cinemax				Boeing Boeing (4:15 PM)								Rules Of Obsession			Fast Getaway (9:35 PM)			The Opposite Of Sex	
CNN		Business International		World News	World Sport	Larry King Live		Business International	World Sport	World News Asia		World News	World Sport	World News Asia	Global Challenges	Your World Today			
Crime/Suspense		Law & Order: Criminal Content		Law & Order: Special Victims Unit		Profiler		Forensic Files	Psychic Detectives	Law & Order		Law & Order: Special Victims Unit		Cold Case				E-Ring	
Discovery Channel		Psychic Witness		Building The Biggest		Raw Nature		Deadliest Season In The World		We Built This City		IBM Innovation Hour		Mythbusters		Building The Biggest		Power Zone	
Disney Channel	Mr. Bean: The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Art Attack/Un-[illegible] Bunny	Suite Life Of Zack And Cody	Lilo & Stitch	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr. Bean: The Animated Series	That's So Raven	Wonderful World Of Disney			Tutenstein	Lizzie Mcguire	Kim Possible	Totally Spies	Wonderful World Of Disney	
ESPN				2006 FIBA Asian Stankovic Cup SFinal				Cheerleading UDA Nat'l Dance Team C'ship		Pool Snooker Premier Snooker League 05		Germany Tonight		Sportscenter Asia	Pool Snooker World Pool League 04 Poland		Sportscenter Asia	The Senior Open C'ships 1st rd	
ETC		American Dreams 3		Change of Heart	Elimidate	Blind Date	Fifth Wheel	Seinfeld	Ambush Makeover	The Tyra Banks Show		Will & Grace 4	Friends 10	Queer Eye For The Straight Guy		Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	The Tonight Show With Jay Leno	
ETC 2nd Avenue		Starting Over		The Maury Povich Show		The Jerry Springer Show		Dr. Phil		NBC Nightly News	The Inside Edition	The Ellen Show		Wheel Of Fortune	Jeopardy	Showdog Moms & Dads		NBC Nightly News	The Inside Edition
EWTN	Chaplet Of Divine Mercy	Chaplet Of Mercy/ Angelus	Virtue Storybook	Truth In The Heart	Rosary With Mother Angelica	EWTN Gallery	The Sacraments Through The Ages	Special Programming		EWTN Live (Encore) With Fr. Mitch Pacwa		Daily Mass		Holy Land Rosary/ Angelus	The Seven Sacraments	Images of Mary	Behold the Man: Spirituality for Men	The Journey Home Encore	
Fox News		On The Record With Greta Van Susteren		The O'Reilly Factor		Your World With Neil Cavuto		Fox & Friends						Fox News Live					
GMA 7	Agawin Mo Man Ang Lahat	Now and Forever (3:15 PM)	Ang Pagbabago (3:45 PM)		Saiyuki	Dragonball Z	Jewel In The Palace	24 Oras		Captain Barbell (7:10 PM)		Majika		I Luv NY (8:50 PM)	Love Of The Condor Heroes	Magpakailanman			Saksi
Hallmark Channel		Strong Medicine (3:15 PM)		Back To You And Me				McLeod's Daughters		Strong Medicine		Missing I		Spooks		Dinotopia: The Election			Spooks (11:45PM)
HBO			Locusts: The 8th Plague			Necessary Roughness				U.S. Marshals (6:55 PM)				Roxanne			Real Women Have Curves		
Hero TV	Yu-Gi-Oh Duel Monsters	Yakitate! Japan	Mr. Ajikko	D.I.C.E.	Super Gals	Shadow Of The Elves	Mission Odyssey	Rune Soldier	Beyblade G-Revolution	Yu-Gi-Oh GX	Naruto	Mirmo de Pon	Inuyasha	Yu-Gi-Oh Duel Monsters	Yakitate! Japan	Mr. Ajikko	D.I.C.E.	Super Gals	Mission Odyssey
IBC 13		EZ Shop				Home Shopping Network	IBC Express Balita	Pangarap Kong Jackpot		EBC Earth Files		Japan Video Topics/ Arirang		Travel Philippines	Japan Video Topics/ Arirang	EBC Earth Files	IBC News Tonite	Home Shopping Network	
JackTV	The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	The Late Show David Letterman		Smackdown				JLU	Just For Laughs (Gags)	Mad TV		That 70s Show	Everybody Hate Chris	The Late Show David Letterman		The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	Comedy Central Presents	South Park	The Man Show
Lifestyle Network	Get Color	30 Minute Meals	Wolfgang Puck	Sweet Dreams	Smart Solutions	Sensible Chic	At Home With	Barefoot Contessa	Everyday Italian	Food 911	Who's Wedding Is It Anyway?		Good Finds	Martha		Your Private Island	Genuine Article	E! True Hollywood Story	
MTV Philippines		Punk'D	Laguna Beach		MTV Hits					Get Spotted		TRL		Punk'D	Laguna Beach				
MYX		Rock MYX	My MYX	Mellow MYX	Urban MYX	Take 5	MYX News	MYX Firsts	Star MYX	OPM MYX	Pop MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		MYX Presents		MYX Bandarito	My MYX	MYX Backtrax	MYXILOG
National Geographic	5 Weddings And A Couple Of Funerals	National Geographic Specials		Megastructures		Naked Science: Surviving Nature's Fury		Top 5 - Hidden Worlds		WOW! Cliffhangers: Saving Bart		About Asia		National Geographic Specials		MegaStructures: Boston's Big Dig		Naked Science: Atlantis	
NBN		Teledyaryo Alas-Tres		Teledyaryo Sports Atbp.			Diyos Ko, Mahal Ko Ba Siya?	Teledyaryo W/ Rey Langit & Angelique Lazo		Tinig ng Bayan (Live)				Teledyaryo Final Edition				Bantay OCW With Susan K	
Net 25	INC Chronicles	Convergence	Auto Motor Sport	The Planet	Tomorrow Today	Ang Tamang Daan		News Beat (Live)		Openline (Live)	Gabay Sa Kalusugan	INC Chronicles E	INC Chronicles F	Ang Pagbubunyag		World Report	Kapatid Sa Hanapbuhay	DWTV Journal News	Tomorrow Today
Nickelodeon	Chalkzone	Hey Arnold!	SpongeBob SquarePants	Rocket Power	Four Eyes	SpongeBob SquarePants/ Right On Top	The Adventures of Jimmy Neutron/ My Life As A Teenage Robot	Nick Kicks/ All Grown Up		The Fairly Odd Parents	Drake & Josh	Unfabulous	Romeo	Naturally Sadie	SpongeBob SquarePants	As Told By Ginger	The Fairly Odd Parents	My Dad The Rock Star	
PBO			Fight Night 8				Lakbay				Hotshots				Ang Boyfriend Kong Gamol				Ratratan
Qtv	Gooduck	Shaman King	Outlaw Star	Galaxy Angel	MMS (My Music Station)		Moms		Phoenix	Irena	Fireworks	Damo	Project 11	Family Zoo		News On Q	Women's Desk		Irene
RPN 9	TV Shopping				Kapatid Show	RPN Aksyon News		Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	The 4400		Medium		Invasion		Newswatch Now	Just For Laughs	Kasangga Mo Ang Langit	Police Hour
SBN 21								Sony Music Video				Oras Ng Himala		Oras ng Katotohanan		Friends Again		Sony Music Video	
Solar Sports						EVB Women's-Shanghai, China		Volleyball China Volley Masters match 1				WNBA '06: Sacramento Monarchs @ Shock				Solar Sports Desk	NBA Access	2006 Thomas Cup SFinals	
Sports Plus			Inside the PGA	Raceworld		World Poker Tour Hollywood Home					Nopi Tunervision	World's Greatest Auto Shows		World Game		Auto Focus		French Open 06 Day 11 MS Final Highlights	
Star Movies			Mosquitoman			Chain Reaction				Enemy Of The State (6:50 PM)				Man On Fire					Black Hawk Down
Star World		The Bold & The Beautiful		General Hospital		Monk		The Simpsons	Malcolm In The Middle	Star News Asia	Seinfeld	Rockstar: Supernova		The Office (US Version)	Arrested Development	The Drew Carey Show	Less Than Perfect	Seinfeld	Rockstar: Supernova
Studio 23				PBL Game 2				Spirits	Blog	Wazzup Wazzup	Two And A Half Men		Joey (8:20 PM)	Grey's Anatomy (9:10 PM)		News Central	Oprah		Rasty World

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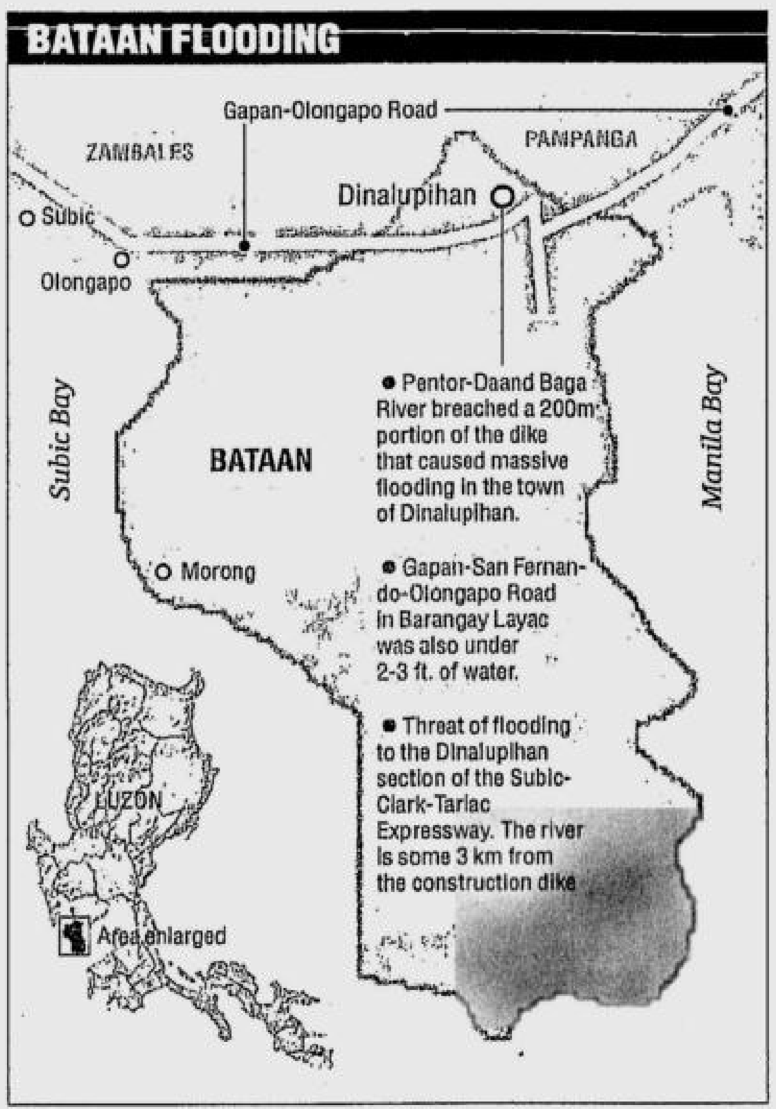
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PAMPANGA
Subic
Olongapo
Dinalupihan
Subic Bay
Manila Bay
BATAAN
Morong
LUZON
Area enlarged
• Pentor-Daand Baga River breached a 200m portion of the dike that caused massive flooding in the town of Dinalupihan.
• Gapan-San Fernando-Olongapo Road in Barangay Layac was also under 2-3 ft. of water.
• Threat of flooding to the Dinalupihan section of the Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway. The river is some 3 km from the construction dike

INQMAP: ESAMBO

Bataan villages flooded as currents breach dike

BALANGA CITY—THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF Dinalupihan, Bataan, declared a state of calamity on Wednesday after strong currents breached an old dike and flooded at least 15 of the town's 46 villages.

Mayor Joel Payumo said the declaration would allow the local government to use money from the calamity fund for relief, rescue and emergency measures.

At least 6,500 families live in the flooded villages, he said.

Payumo said the Pentor-Daang Bago River overflowed and sent water through a 200-meter damaged portion of the dike, causing floods three to four feet deep.

Residents fled to safety as water burst through the Sta. Isabel section of the dike at past 7 a.m. on Tuesday, the mayor said.

They piled sandbags to plug the breach in the dike, which was built in the 1960s.

Payumo said the Gapan-San Fernando-Olongapo Road in Barangay Layac was under two to three feet of water, making it passable only to trucks.

He said he had alerted Narciso Abaya, president of the Bases Conversion Development Authority, on the possible threat of flooding to the Dinalupihan section of the Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway. The river is 3 km from the construction site.

The regional Office of Civil Defense said at least 104 families in Dinalupihan had fled to houses of their relatives.

Gov. Enrique Garcia ordered the release of 500 sacks of rice to 7,000 families whose houses were flooded in Dinalupihan and Hermosa towns.

Records from the provincial government said the floods destroyed P1.3 million worth of rice and other agricultural crops in Dinalupihan, Hermosa and Abucay.

In Zambales, officials in San Narciso town ordered the evacuation of 575 families in Barangays La Paz, Pascual, Alusiis and Libertad as floodwater rose following the breaching of the Vega-Maculcul dike on Tuesday night.

Rescue teams from the Philippine Army, Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority and the US Navy Training Center were helping in the evacuation, according to Neri Amparo, OCD director in Central Luzon.

OCD reports said at least three major rivers in Zambales were choked with Mt. Pinatubo lahar.

The Department of Public Works and Highways ordered the close monitoring of major bridges like Macolcol in San Felipe town and Bucao in Botolan town to prevent the province's isolation from the rest of Central Luzon.

In Bulacan, a man died in San Jose del Monte City on Tuesday when he was swept by water from an overflowing creek.

Reports from the Provincial Disaster Coordinating Office (PDCO) said Dodong Dionisio, 21, drowned when a creek in Barangay Gaya-gaya overflowed.

PDCO reports said at least 36 villages in the towns of Bocaue, Obando, Marilao, Balagtas and Meycauayan, and in Malolos City were flooded.

Sections of the MacArthur Highway in Meycauayan, Marilao and Bocaue, which were closed to light vehicles on Tuesday, were opened on Wednesday.

Water level at the Ipo Dam on Wednesday dropped to 100.79 meters following the release of impounded water on Tuesday night. The spilling level is 101 m. *Reports from Tonette Orejas, Greg Refraccion, Cesar Villa and Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Appeal to exempt veggie trucks from load limit on NLEx rejected

By Delmar Cariño
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET—The National Road Board and the Department of Public Works and Highways rejected appeals to exempt vegetable trucks from the load limit on cargo imposed by the anti-overloading law (Republic Act 8794).

Alberto Suansing, NRB director, said the load of 13.5 metric tons per axle was applicable to all vehicles regardless of the goods they transport—vegetables, poultry, cement, rice, lumber or steel.

"The law provided the limit and our only duty is to implement it," he told farmers and members of the Benguet Traders and Truckers Association (BTTA) and Benguet Vegetable Truck Drivers Association (BVTDA) in a consultation here on Tuesday.

Mariano Alquiza, DPWH-Cordillera director, said exemption could not be granted since overloaded trucks would reduce the life span of national roads or would cause mechanical defects among trucks that would likely trigger fatal road accidents.

He said 120,000 of the 970,000 road accidents yearly were traced to overloaded vehicles.

The BTTA and the BVTDA earlier complained that the anti-overloading law enforced at the North Luzon Expressway (NLEx) has drastically cut the volume of their vegetable delivery to Metro Manila, resulting in an annual loss of P2.4 billion.

Drivers and truckers said vegetable haulers must be exempted from the load limit because their cargo was perishable and dependent on quotas and price fluctuations.

But the Manila North Tollways Corp. (MNTC), the NLEx operator, said it could not lift the load limit or else risk all cargo trucks asking for the same privilege.

Renato Ticzon, MNTC marketing director, said traders should instead learn how to properly pack their cargo.

He said the NLEx's expected life of six years would be "seriously threatened" if overloaded trucks were allowed to use it.

"Amending RA 8794 is not also a wise option since the load limit might even be decreased to 12 metric tons per axle," said Raul Ignacio, MNTC vice president for assurance services.

"This is because the 13.5 metric tons per axle is even very high compared to international standards. Some European countries and the United States observe 10 to 12 metric tons per axle [limit]," he said.

ROUNDUP

Another cell site razed

LIBMANAN, Camarines Sur—Eight suspected New People's Army rebels set fire to a Globe cell site along the Maharlika Highway on Monday afternoon. Insp. Joel Herrero, chief of the Municipal Police Office, said the rebels ransacked, destroyed and burned pieces of equipment that included the control tower of the cell site before they retreated to the Tangco Vaca mountain at the southwestern part of the town. Herrero said a certain Wilfredo Belgica, 53, caretaker of the Globe cell site, said it took the armed men about 30 minutes to destroy it. Since January, at least 10 Globe towers in different parts of the country have been attacked.

Juan Escandor Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

'Ka Roger' arrested

CALAMBA CITY—Police arrested a former New People's Army (NPA) rebel who had become the most wanted leader of an organized crime group in Laguna on Friday. Supt. Ricardo Villanueva, chief of the Special Operations Group-Laguna, said Larry Passion, 43, who used "Ka Roger" as his alias while he was still an active NPA rebel, was facing several charges for robbery and hijacking. He is the leader of the Larry Passion Group involved in hijacking, highway robberies, holdup, car theft, gun-for-hire, and drug trafficking.

Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

4 dead in shootings

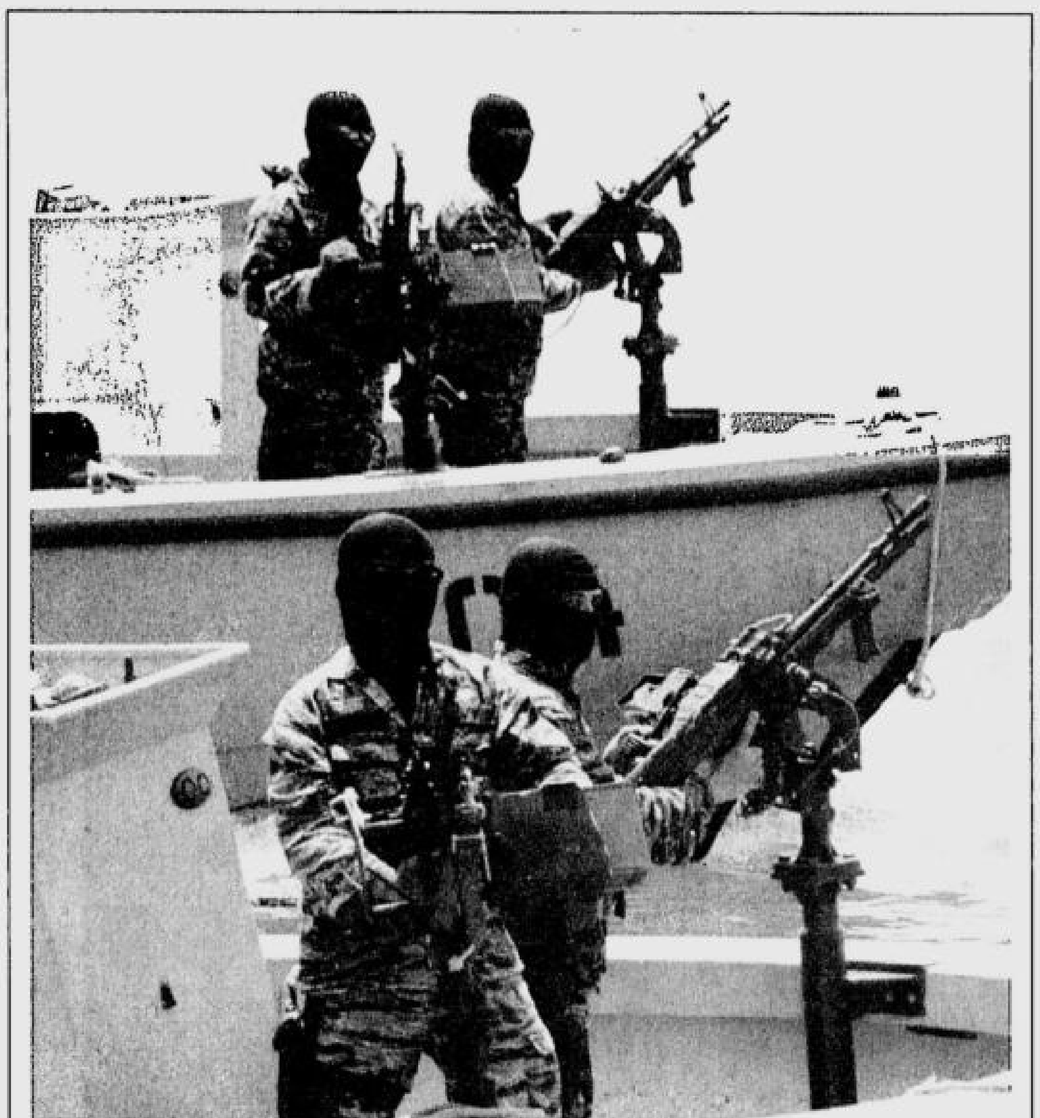
CALAMBA CITY—Four people, two of them suspected of involvement in oil pilferage, were killed and two others wounded in two separate shooting incidents here last weekend. On Sunday, two motorcycle-riding men gunned down two suspected members of a syndicate involved in pilferage along a narrow road in Barangay Makiling. In a report, police said Armando Matira, 44, and his brother Arnel, 40 were travelling on a barangay road at about 11:30 a.m. in a jeep driven by their cousin Nelson Matira, 35, when gunmen carrying .45 cal. pistols waylaid them. The brothers were killed on the spot while their cousin took a bullet in the left arm. Four hours later, a former Army soldier shot dead a lawyer and his cousin in Barangay Canlubang. Rodel Constantino, 42, of Parañaque City, and Lazaro Andres, 55, of Bacoor, Cavite, were surveying the property of Alaska Corp. in Sitio Old Stable when they were shot by suspect Camelion Montecilla, 35. He said the victims were with the suspect when the latter grabbed Constantino's .45 cal. pistol.

Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Wage hike in C. Mindanao

COTABATO CITY—The Regional Tripartite Wages and Productivity Board (RTWPB) has approved new minimum wage rates for Central Mindanao, showing an average raise of P10.50 per day. The new rates will apply to workers of Sarangani, Sultan Kudarat, North and South Cotabato, including the cities of General Santos, Koronadal, Tacurong, Kidapawan and Cotabato. Non-agricultural workers will get P224 (to include P11 cost of living allowance), higher by P10.50 compared to the previous P213.50, said regional board secretary Joel Evangelista. Except for plantation workers, farmers will receive P205 (P5-Cola included). Plantation employees will get P208 (with P8 Cola). Retail and service workers will get P212 (P6 Cola) daily. The new rates take effect 15 days after publication, Evangelista said.

Charlie Señase, PDI Mindanao Bureau



FIGHTING TERROR BING GONZALES/PDI PHOTO
Special forces from the Philippine Navy conduct an antiterrorism drill at the Davao Gulf near the Sta. Ana Wharf in Davao City. The focus of the drill was the fight against piracy at sea.

Bishop admits info on mining 'second hand'

SORSOGON CITY—A BISHOP WHO HEADED an investigation of two mine spills in Rapu-Rapu refused to testify on the findings of his team, saying the pieces of information he had on mining on the island were all "second hand."

Judge Raul de Leon of the Regional Trial Court Branch 52 issued a subpoena to Sorsogon Bishop Arturo Bastes, who headed the now-defunct commission, to help the court in deciding on the motion for a temporary restraining order filed by lawyer Gil Gojol.

Bastes said he wrote the court and asked that he be excused from testifying as he was not an expert on the issue and that his information on the mining operations were all "second-hand."

"I am not the proper person that should be asked to testify because my knowledge is not first-hand information. They should summon Charles Avila or the other members of the commission who are technical people," he said.

The motion for a TRO was filed July 5 here, well ahead of a similar case filed in Manila by some 800 antimining advocates.

The Mines and Geosciences Bureau has asked the court to deny the motion, saying it was premature.

MGB Director Horacio Ramos, in a reply sent to the court, said the test run was not an assurance that mining operation in Rapu-Rapu would be allowed to fully resume by the government.

He said the MGB was the proper government agency to determine whether or not the mining operation should be allowed to continue, and not the courts.

Gojol said he filed the case on behalf of more than 2,000 fishermen and fish vendors who claimed their livelihood suffered as a result of two waste spills from the mining operations.

Officials of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, led by Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes, vouched for the safety of the mining operation after inspecting the mining site and its facilities.

The Bastes commission has recommended to the government, among other things, the cancellation of the company's environmental compliance certificate, saying mining could never be safe in Rapu-Rapu due to its fragile ecosystem.

The commission's report was cited by Gojol in his petition and asked the court to summon Bastes to testify on the findings.

Lafayette officials, meanwhile, said the motion for TRO had no legal basis and would bring injury to the company, its employees, suppliers and the host communities.

They sought the case's dismissal, citing technical infirmity in the case after it noted the absence of a certification of non-forum shopping. *Bobby Labalan, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Negros drug lord convicted, draws life term

By Carla P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—ONE OF NEGROS Occidental's alleged notorious drug lords was sentenced to life in prison for the transport of shabu in Aklan in 2003.

Jose Kim Banay Cuadra, alias Boy Cuadra, was found guilty of violating the Dangerous Drugs Act by Aklan Regional Trial Court Judge Niovady Marin in a ruling he handed down Tuesday amid tight security at his courtroom in Kalibo, according to clerk of court George Wendell Villanueva.

Marin also ordered Cuadra to pay a P500,000 fine, Villanueva said.

Immediately after the sentence was handed down, a police escort took Cuadra to the Caticlan Airport where he was immediately flown to be detained at the national penitentiary in Muntinlupa, Villanueva said.

A white plastic bottle containing shabu (methamphetamine hydrochloride) weighing 11.33 grams was seized from Cuadra when he was arrested at the Caticlan Airport on April 22, 2003.

Court records showed that Cuadra was arrested by the Caticlan aviation security while he was about to transport shabu to Bacolod City on a chartered plane.

Cuadra claimed he was framed by his arresting officers but the court said there was no evidence to support his allegation.

"It is also incredible and impossible that the aviation security officers who just came to know the accused a few minutes before his arrest could readily resort to such a scheme," he said.

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INQUIRER Southern Luzon

Editor **Jun Bandayrel**
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Hoping for less destruction

By Gil Francis Arevalo
Legazpi City

THE WAY RICARDO DY SEES IT, the quiet yet unpredictable behavior of Mayon volcano is similar to that prior to its 1984 eruption, considered one of the most destructive since 1814, but casualties would be fewer than before since disaster management has become more extensive.

'At least, people are now listening to the warnings and contingency plans are being laid out early'

Dy, 73, the oldest Mayon climber and officer of the Provincial Disaster Coordinating Council, recalls that when the volcano blew up in August 1984, almost 80 people died, including farmers and children, who were trapped within the permanent danger zone.

Cascading volcanic debris engulfed communities and destroyed many houses, roads, farms and infrastructure facilities, including the once popular Marcos golf course in Lidong, Sto. Domingo town.

Such would hardly happen now since people have been receiving immediate information through different mediums tapped by the local disaster coordinating councils and the government units, he says.

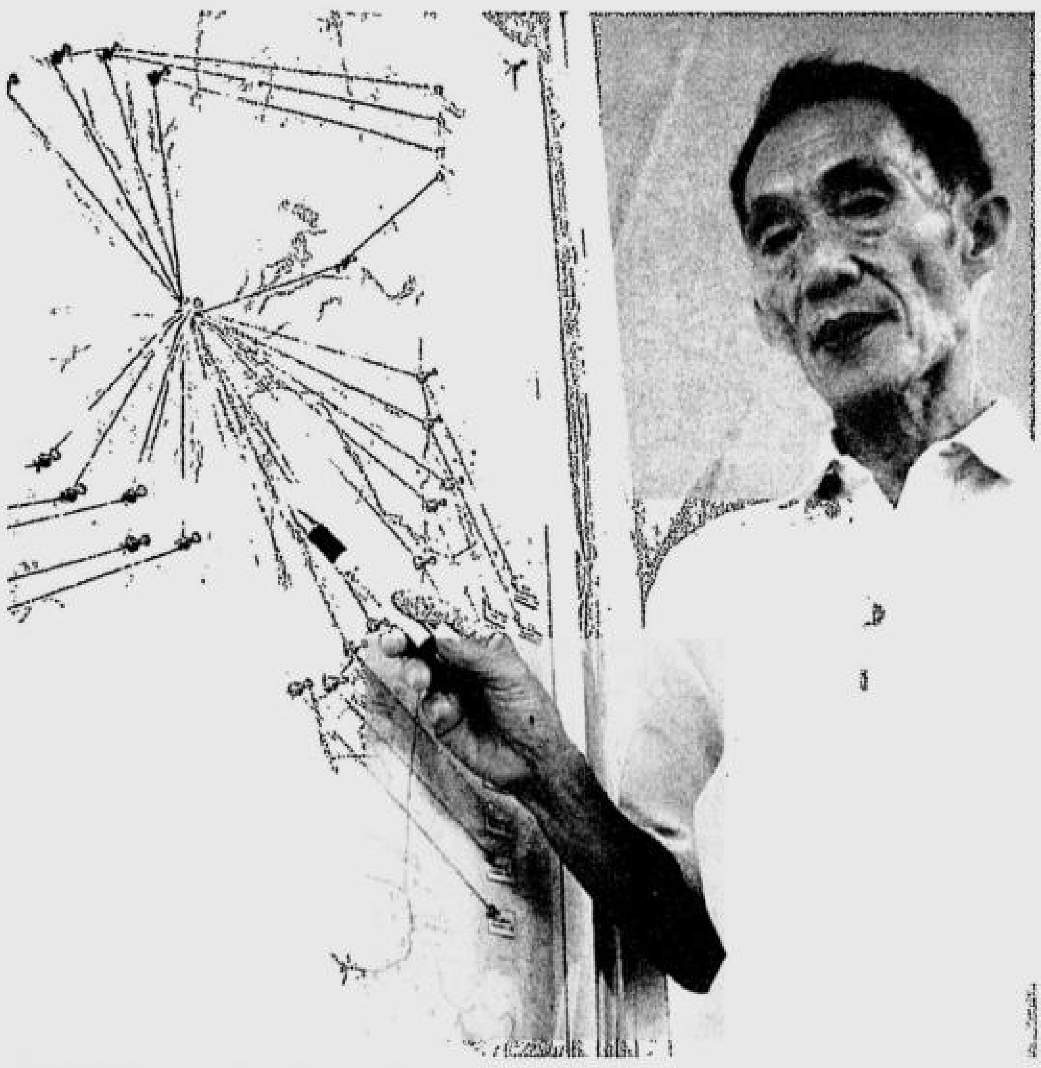
With work force, technology, systems and evacuation centers on stand-by, Dy says casualties and destruction to property would be minimal in case of a major eruption within the next few days.

Experienced

A former director of the provincial Office of Civil Defense, Dy holds the record of more than 500 ascents to Mayon's summit since 1943.

"Happening only in a matter of days, the 1984 eruption was characterized by an increasing surge of pyroclastic materials, trickles of lava, emissions of increasing volume of gas, and the presence of numerous fumaroles or volcanic vents," Dy says.

With the "erratic reactions of Mayon," the looming major eruption could happen soon, he notes. If more signs of an imminent eruption are found, he warns of an ensuing mud flow or ash fall capable of destroying many lives and property.



RICARDO Dy, the oldest climber of Mayon, shows the danger areas around Mount Mayon.
NIÑO JESUS Y. ORBETA

Mayon, at 2,402 m (8,077 ft) above sea level, is considered more dangerous than Mount Pinatubo and other active volcanoes in the Philippines.

The PDCC has consistently warned people to leave the 6-km-radius permanent danger zone due to heightened activity associated with continuous rumbling that signals the release of inner pressure through the summit.

Cedric Daep, the council's operations officer, and Eduardo Laguerta of the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology have already issued warnings to local government units to brace for the worst in the coming days.

Residents of Barangays Lidong and Sta. Misericordia in Sto. Domingo and Culiat in Daraga still recall the "wounds" they suffered during the 1984 eruption.

"It was total nightmare for us. We lost our two children, small farm land and precious carabao. We were able to move on, but every time I hear or see people in panic, it is some kind of torture to me," Lhea Balunso, 46, a resident of Lidong, says.

Unforgettable fire

Three months before the 1984 eruption, Dy accompanied Australian climber Graeme Walker to the summit.

He remembers the time when they suddenly choked from gas emitted by the volcano.

They were surprised by the height of the plug above the rim, which used to be several meters below. Plugs are solidified magma.

It was a sign of imminent eruption and the two had to go down fast.

"I could not panic because I was considering my companion and there was no other choice, but to go down as fast as we could and find a safer place possibly within Mayon," Dy adds.

"It was really frightening as there was no prior notice from the concerned agency that Mayon was already on its new eruption phase, but we saw with our very eyes the increased volume of gas, the presence of volcanic vents, and the molten magma from the volcano boiling about several kilometers away from our feet," he says.

Dy recalls that the changing color of the clouds and the rise of grayish hot steam, along with the sudden loud rumblings, were simply astounding.

What happened after three months was a violent eruption characterized by horrific lava explosion.

"It was the most challenging thing to happen to me as far as climbing Mayon and saving lives in times of disaster are concerned. It is comparable to the time I reached the top of one of the world's most beautiful volcanoes at the age of 10. I was feeling the need to overcome one's fear again," he recounts.

"At least, people are now listening to the warnings and contingency plans are being laid out early. I believe that we have gained from the past experiences as we have been able to establish a more extensive disaster management program," he says.

Noted poet tells youth: Love reading

By Ephraim Aguilar
Camalig, Albay

LIVING A SERENE LIFE IN what he fondly calls a "jungle" is a silent treasure of Philippine literature, a poet of undiminished passion who tells young people to dedicate more time to reading and not to forget their own culture.

POET Celedonio Aguilar in his mini-library beside his retirement home at Comun Village in Camalig, Albay where books he wrote and read are kept as treasures,
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Now 83, Celedonio Aguilar, an internationally acclaimed poet but has managed to be quiet and humble about his feats through the years, chose to live in his retirement home at Comun Village in the third-class municipality (annual income: P21 million-P27 million) of Camalig in Albay, far from the hurly-burly of urban life, delighted by its tranquil atmosphere.

Celedonio, who was born on March 6, 1923 in Albay, is the writer behind the poetry books "Shaken Shadows" (1966), "Time and Sunken Sun" (1971), "Pink Sun and Neutral Dust" (1978), and "Before the Tide Sets In" (2004).

His books are "Readings in Philippine Literature" (1994), "Critiques on Poetry" (1997), "Speaking and Writing English" (1997), and "Understanding Poetry Through Imagery" (2000).

Noble teacher

Despite a sudden shift from a military career, Celedonio still managed to soar high in teaching job, though he did not have an innate passion for it.

He began as an elementary teacher in 1946 at the Camalig District School. He also taught English in various public and private schools.

Eventually, he became a dean in different undergraduate and graduate schools and a general education supervisor for the Higher Education Division in Bicol, now the Commission on Higher Education.

His love for teaching was also paralleled by his unending search for learning. He stopped teaching and headed for Manila to pursue his studies.

Celedonio earned three masteral degrees and one doctorate in Bicol University, Silliman University and the University of the Philippines Diliman from the 1960s to the 1980s.

Struggling

It was through reading children's poems as demanded by his job as a grade school teacher that he discovered his talent in poetry.

His first published poem was "Firefly" in 1947 on the nationally circulated Journal of Education Teachers' Magazine.

At 28, he started to evolve from being a writer of children's poems to a mature poet until he was able to publish not just in various papers and magazines but in books as well. In 1951, "Shadow of Self" was published in the weekly Women's Magazine.

Celedonio's poems usually centered on nature, death, life, and culture.

Now at 83 and spending most of his thinking sessions in his gazebo, he still continues to write.

Celedonio knows what made Filipino poets extra special. A rich culture, he said, is engraved in every Filipino artist.

"We Filipinos have profound cultural roots which give depth to our works," he said.

However, this has a downside, too, he said. The cultural profundity becomes the poet's struggle and hurdle to international acceptance and renown by alienating the international readership.

Multimedia age

According to Celedonio, the proliferation of different mediums of communication is also a challenge facing veteran Filipino poets.

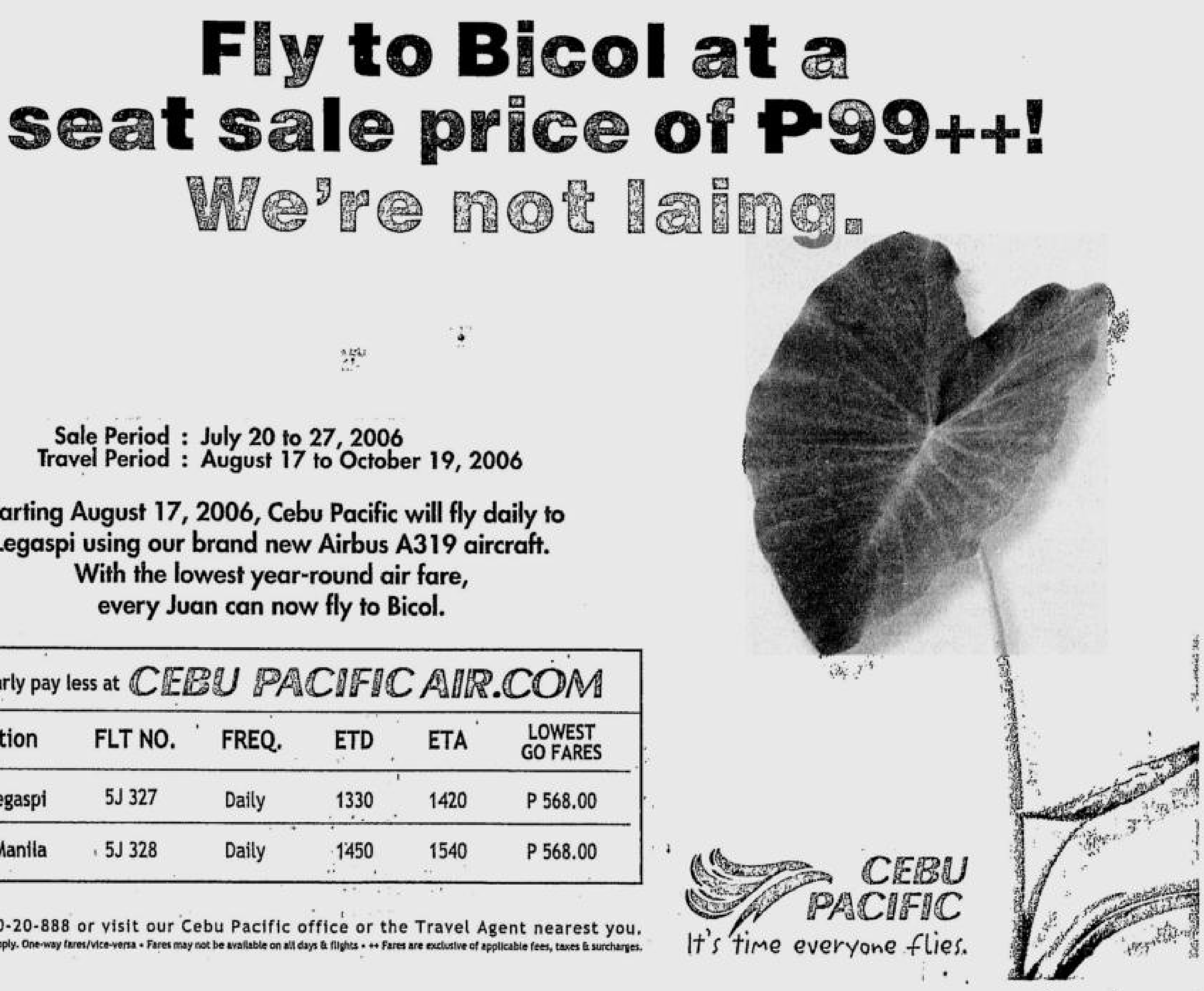
He said the emergence of the Internet has lessened the people's love for books they passionately and persistently write.

"It makes access to information faster but sadly it has taught people to be lazy. It made them read less and learn less. These technologies can just be a support but basically we all need to read books, the richest source of knowledge," Celedonio said.

He added that the Internet, though serving as a big window to the rest of the world, was also detrimental to the Filipinos' cultural fiber if "we will not give culture enough importance and forget it."

"How will we be able to hand down our rich cultural heritage to the future generations if we are inclined to forget it in the first place? The most effective antidote to this problem is to read, read, read Filipino books and literature," Celedonio said.

(The writer is not related to the poet. –Ed.)



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Some excerpts from the secret FBI files

(Editors Note: The INQUIRER *late last year ran a series of articles on US Embassy reports about the Philippines which were believed to be part of the stolen FBI files. The embassy had declined comment on those reports which referred to plots against President Macapagal-Arroyo. Here are some of the highlights of those reports):*

April 15, 2005 report

- The broad support that Ms Arroyo enjoyed following her inauguration last year has faded and public frustration with the economy, corruption and the stalled efforts at reform have taken their toll on her standing.
- Reports from the US Defense Attaché's Office suggest [the plotters] are planning an undefined "military operation" involving elements from all four services that is intended to intimidate the President into resigning.
- Rumors are rampant but vague, though the latest have officers moving against Ms Arroyo soon, possibly as early as May 2005.
- Information on her hard core supporters, including how well armed or organized [they] are, also is imprecise. Some reporting suggests, however, that Ms Arroyo may depend on these groups rather than her unreliable military to defend her administration.
- Despite being incarcerated for almost four years, deposed President Joseph Estrada still maintains the highest popularity ratings in the country. He equates legitimacy with popular support and his intention to revive the pro-Estrada fervor has already produced destabilization rumors.

June 2, 2005 report

- Information from the military and civilian contacts describes two separate military factions plotting to remove Ms Arroyo: A radical group of junior officers and a more cautious group of flag officers.
- The younger officers reportedly had planned to oust the President and support an opposition-led core-committee of leaders.
- But the generals have indicated that they will be compelled to act before the reassignments and/or retirements are announced in July 2005.
- Plans by opposition groups would begin with civilian demonstrations or strikes that would provoke an overreaction from Ms Arroyo, providing a pretext for military action.
- Several crucial factors, however, should lead plotters to conclude a coup is premature.
- No political cover: In addition to the problem of a lack of pretext, civilian support may be in doubt.
- Sensitive reporting indicates civilian anti-Arroyo groups, including the Church, business organizations and labor, have backed away from dissident military efforts to involve them in the plot.
- Key units are currently under the command of Arroyo loyalists, and her intelligence services are generally believed to have been monitoring individuals suspected of opposing her.
- In view of the substantial number of plotters—it is a virtual certainty that Ms Arroyo is aware of the plotting.
- According to our source, the opposition has not indicated as to what type of transition government will be installed after she is removed, or who would lead it.
- A civilian government, which would call for new elections within a year, has some support among most observers. However, several diplomats maintained that they are worried that radical military elements might envision a longer stay, if given support to oust Ms Arroyo.

July 12, 2005 report

- (The Embassy) cannot fully rule out a possible near-term attempt to oust Ms Arroyo, but sees no chance of success given the fragmented, weak opposition and continued lack of a galvanizing issue.

Estrada: I didn't get documents from Michael Ray

From page A1

stepped down (from office)," said Estrada, who was ousted in January 2001 by people power.

But Estrada said he received documents from Aquino's alleged coconspirator—Leandro Aragoncillo, a former Federal Bureau of Investigation analyst.

Aragoncillo, a Filipino-American who pleaded guilty early this year, had said his actions were aimed at helping politicians who wanted to overthrow President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Estrada said he was not even close to Aquino, who is associated with Lacson, Aquino's superior officer at the PNP for many years.

Falling out

The former President and Lacson had a falling out when the latter ran for President in 2004 despite Estrada's plea that the senator support the presidential bid of the late actor Fernando Poe Jr.

"I cannot be linked to Aquino because I'm not even close to Ping (Lacson) ... it cannot happen," he said.

Estrada said Gonzalez was better off using the powers of the justice department in going after former Justice Hernando Perez, who is accused of extorting $2 million from an Argentine energy firm.

The money reportedly came from the $14-million bribe for the approval of the contract for the Caliraya-Botocan-Kalayaan hydroelectric plant in Laguna won by the Industrias Metalurgicas Pescamora Sociedad Anonima (Impsa).

"He should concentrate on the Perez issue. All documents are there staring him in the face," he said of the documents sent by Swiss authorities allegedly confirming the transfer of money by Perez through a Swiss bank.

Estrada wondered why the government had yet to file a formal charge against Perez.

"Why is Gonzalez too quick to jump on the Aquino issue, but slow on the Nani Perez or (Jocelin), Joc-joc Bolante and Hello Garci issues?" he said.

Bolante is the former agriculture undersecretary who is accused of disbursing P728-million in fertilizer fund to allies of President Macapagal-Arroyo to ensure her victory in the 2004 presidential election. *(Story on Page A1.)*

The Hello Garci issue refers to purported wiretapped conversations between a former election commissioner and Ms Arroyo, which the opposition claims involved the rigging of the 2004 elections.

Barking up wrong tree

Sought for comment, Gonzalez said Estrada's admission that he received documents from Aragoncillo did not make him any less guilty of espionage.

"It was as if he already admitted receiving documents from Aquino because Aquino and Aragoncillo are co-conspirators," he said.

As to the Perez case, he said he had already turned the matter to the Office of the Ombudsman, which is investigating the case.

"He is barking up the wrong tree. Tell him I don't have anything to do with the Perez case," he said.

Fall guy

In Malacañang, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said Aquino was nothing but a "fall guy" for the "real agents of evil."

"In admitting his guilt, Aquino has virtually confirmed the dark plan staged by his bosses in the opposition to destabilize and undermine our democratic system by foul means, including spying on our foremost ally in the world," Bunye said.

The Palace, he said, "welcomes the fact that justice has been served but it is clear that Aquino is just a sacrificial lamb and a fall guy for the real agents of evil that planned an aborted conspiracy against the Filipino people."

He said the the Philippine government would follow the trail of evil to the end. "While we leave to the US justice system the penalties that would be imposed on Aquino, we assure the Filipino people that he will still have a lot of explaining to do should he be deported back to the Philippines," Bunye said.

Embarrassing situation

In the House of Representatives, Deputy Minority Leader Alan Peter Cayetano said Aquino's plea bargain also benefited Ms Arroyo because it saved her from an embarrassing situation.

"Aquino not only saved Senator Lacson and former President Estrada from being indicted but actually saved the Arroyo administration from having to answer these issues in that international court of public opinion," he said.

Cayetano, a lawyer, explained that if the trial pushed through, the prosecution would have to produce the documents admittedly taken from the White House, which includes reports on Ms Arroyo, her administration, and possibly information on the "Hello, Garci" tapes.

"And this would be a huge embarrassment for GMA (President Arroyo) not only locally but internationally. So it's the administration that's able to breathe a breath of fresh air by Michael Ray pleading guilty because these documents may be the straw that break the camel's back," he said. *With a report from Michael Ubac*

Bolante's asylum bid puts him beyond reach of RP law

From page A1

avoid repatriation and evade trial on charges of large-scale corruption, malversation and plunder of government funds.

"Bolante obviously availed himself of the US system to give him time and to escape Philippine law by applying for asylum. He knows for a fact that he is not qualified to do so but he also knows that the US process will take quite some time before his application is officially denied," Chavez said.

"So in the meantime, truth has to be buried temporarily in the files of unsorted rubbish. This gives a temporary comfort zone for his benefactors in Malacañang," he said.

Palace offers security

Yesterday, Malacañang assured Bolante that Philippine authorities can provide him with security against communist hit men.

"If it is true, we will provide him with the necessary security should he decide to come home," Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said.

But Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. does not expect the government "to do anything," saying it is "to the President's advantage that he (Bolante) is kept away from our jurisdiction."

Bolante, a close associate of First Gentleman Mike Arroyo, is seeking asylum in the US because, he claims, the NPA is out to kill him for his disbursement of the P728 million in fertilizer funds that the NPA believes disadvantaged the farmers, said a source in Los Angeles.

The funds were disbursed to allies of President Macapagal-Arroyo purportedly to help ensure her victory in the the 2004 presidential election.

In a statement, Rosal said Bolante should be repatriated to the country "so he could spill the beans on how he connived with Malacañang to use the fertilizer fund as well as the recovered Marcos wealth to bankroll Gloria Arroyo's 2004 electoral campaign and bribe various government and election officials to secure her victory."

Bolante left Manila last year after ignoring several Senate summonses to appear at its inquiry into the alleged mismanagement of the fertilizer fund in the runup to the 2004 elections.

On July 7, Bolante flew into Los Angeles from Seoul supposedly carrying a canceled B1/B2 visa, and was arrested by US immigration authorities at the airport.

His arrest came four months after the Senate agriculture committee concluded its inquiry into the anomaly and recommended the filing of charges against Bolante, the architect of the fund disbursement, and several other current and former agriculture officials before the Office of the Ombudsman.

He is set to appear before Federal Judge DD Sitgraves in the immigration court at the San Pedro Detention Center in California on July 31.

Oddities

Chavez noted that the "unexplained oddities" in the cancellation of Bolante's visa, his detention, and his application for asylum pointed to the collusion of Malacañang and some US officials to keep the former agriculture undersecretary in the US.

"His case is very strange. They canceled his visa while he was still on flight to the US. But instead of immediately deporting him back to the country, which is the usual practice, they detained him and allowed him to apply for asylum," Chavez said.

Some senators scoffed at Bolante's plan to seek political asylum in the US even, as they pressed the Philippine government to take steps to block this.

"What persecution? As a matter of fact he's being coddled by the authorities of government," Pimentel said.

He pointed out that political asylum could only apply to "political officials being harassed by those in power," like Jovito Salonga, Romy Capulong, Heherson Alvarez, Raul Manglapus and Bonifacio Gillego during martial law.

Child of God

"They fled the country because they were being harassed. Obviously, this is not the case of Bolante. He is not being harassed by anyone, much less by the executive department, who is his ally," he said in the interview.

Sen. Franklin Drilon agreed: "Persecution because of political beliefs is a ground for asylum. Jocjoc is a child of god. Why would he be afraid to come home? There's no basis for his claim that he's being hunted down by the NPA."

"More than anything, this is a ruse on his part not to face charges in the country. But there is no basis for his claim of political asylum," he added.

Sen. Rodolfo Biazon said Bolante was not being persecuted. "He is not being persecuted for his race, religion or political belief."

Biazon asked the Department of Foreign Affairs to initiate moves to stop Bolante's petition by assuring the US government that it would protect him from the rebels.

"If the government is really serious in fighting corruption, the government should initiate moves to block his application for asylum," he said.

Whether the NPA threat was real, the government should protect Bolante if only to convince the US government that "there is no basis for the request for asylum," Biazon said.

Extradition

The government should next move for his extradition. And since this is a foreign relations issue, it is the DFA, not the Senate, which should coordinate the move, the senator said. *With a report from Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

UP engineers' landfill is a dream dump

From page A1

next few months.

Once operational, it can service the entire Metro Manila and Bulacan province.

The site in Sitio Tiakad, Barangay San Mateo, is the best ever for a landfill project for its sheer size and strategic location, said the project proponent, chemical engineer Ramon Angelo. "A waste memorial park, a showcase of waste handling in the country," he said.

"This project will hopefully be a very good example of a facility for proper solid waste management in the country, with all its required components," said engineer Mylene M. Palaypayon, the team leader.

Angelo said the project was conceptualized in line with the government's policy to adopt a systematic, comprehensive and sound ecological solid waste management program under Republic Act No. 9003, or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000, to ensure public health and protection of the environment.

ECC grant

Officials of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources granted an environment clearance certificate for the project on June 23, with a Category 4 grade, the highest given so far to a landfill project. The document allows the proponent to widen the area to 148 hectares of land in the next few years.

All landfills, it is said, are dumps, but not all landfills are dumps. Unlike an ordinary dump, a landfill is covered with a layer of soil after treating every three to four meters of garbage. Aside from soil cover, a landfill, before receiving waste, is spread with composite soil liner to protect the watershed.

A landfill is also treated with enzymes to prevent pests and foul smell.

At least 10 major dumps and landfills service Metro Manila. Among these are Payatas, 23.2 ha; San Mateo, 73 ha; Clark, 85 ha; and Carmona, 63 ha.

A former dump, the 22-ha Smokey Mountain in Tondo, Manila, was closed by the Ramos administration in May 1993. It had a Category 2 rating; San Mateo, Category 3.

The Norzagaray landfill is expected to receive between 2,000 and 3,000 tons of garbage a day, compared with Clark's 1,500 tons and Payatas, 1,200 tons. The 63-ha Carmona has a daily capacity of only 1,000 tons, while Smokey had 1,500 tons.

Inverted pyramid

Tons of garbage usually form a huge "pyramid-type mountain" daily in existing dumps and landfills. But in Norzagaray, which is on a mountaintop 80 meters above sea level, it will be an inverted pyramid with an estimated depth of 60 meters.

"We will never have a landslide here, the kind Payatas had experienced years ago," Angelo said. It will take at least 10 years to fill up the 18.8 ha of the Norzagaray landfill that is currently being developed, and about 20 years for the entire 148-ha property.

Bulacan province has a total waste generation of about 700 tons per day and Quezon City, 1,700 tons. Assuming that all local government units in Bulacan and in Quezon City will tap the new facility, with waste diversion of 15-20 percent per day, the 18.8-ha facility is estimated to have a life span of 10 years with a total volume of 8,820,000 cubic meters.

Construction of the access roads will be finished this month. The landfill can start receiving wastes from neighboring towns and cities in August or September.

This early, two American companies have expressed interest in helping Angelo's group develop the area. The group will shoulder the project's initial funds.

Colors galore

Once operational, garbage segregators will wear hard hats, rubber boots, gas masks, goggles and gloves, aside from color-coded uniforms. Supervisors and security people will wear yellow uniforms, while engineers and executives will be in white.

The landfill will be operational 7/24. It can accommodate 200 garbage trucks a day.

To date, however, the Norzagaray landfill has not been authorized to receive hospital and other toxic wastes. "We are capable, but we are not allowed yet. But we do have provisions just in case toxic wastes land upon us by accident," Angelo said.

Angelo discovered the site while looking for a "mine-out" or a source of soil for areas left by cement mining companies in Norzagaray.

The site is 14 km southeast of Norzagaray's town proper, bounded in the east by the Sierra Madre mountain range and on the south, by Montalban, Rizal.

It is accessible not only to Bulacan communities but also to northern Metro Manila and some towns of Rizal. It is 21.5 km from Commonwealth Road in Quezon City and 9 km from the Novaliches-Norzagaray national road in Barangay Igay, San Jose del Monte City in Bulacan.

Forest ambience

If the C-6 road project pushes through, the landfill will have a main entrance there, only 5 km from the town proper of San Mateo.

The area was once considered a rustic place with pristine scenery, good water quality, ambient air and ecologically sound environment.

Based on a study done by Palaypayon's group, the site, although devoid of any primary forest growths, still has the ambience of forest scenery due to its rolling to hilly terrain, with steep cliffs of high relief in some sections of the deeply incised narrow valleys.

The view from the top still offers a panorama of abundant vegetation. Different varieties of fruit-bearing trees are mixed with secondary forest growths and tropical grasses and shrubs.

Groundwater is considered poor. The water bearing horizons are tight, indicating a very low hydraulic conductivity due to the inherent characteristics of the rock suite in the project.

Angelo abandoned his initial plan to dig soil for mining sites after the owners of the private property said they wanted to develop the rugged terrain into a residential-commercial area. Some of them met with Angelo and his team but chose a custodian to deal with them on the agreement to lease and develop the property.

A team of experts

He later commissioned a former DENR official to draft a proposal, but the work was rejected by the department for its infirmities. The ECC was granted only after a second group, the UPLB team led by Palaypayon and Marloe B. Sundo, submitted a more comprehensive concept design.

Palaypayon is a civil and environment engineer. Sundo is also a civil engineer who majored in transportation engineering. Both teach at UPLB and are experienced in environmental engineering, primarily on landfill design.

"We are working as a team of different technical expertise, one is working on transportation engineering and surveying, one is working on drainage engineering, one on geotechnical engineering, and I am into environmental engineering," Palaypayon said.

"We are composed of relatively young engineers. But we have our own capacities to technically address the needs of the project," she said.

First phase

Norzagaray is her team's second landfill after San Jose del Monte. The first of the project's three phases will focus on an 8.87-ha portion on the west, bordering the national highway and adjacent to the proposed alignment with C-6.

It will cover all the project components—sanitary landfill, materials recovery facility, dumping and tipping pads, compost-fertilizer pit and leachate ponds—as well as access road, drainage facility, administration building, canteen, water supply system and workers' quarters.

Phases 2 and 3 involve expansion to the rest of the property.

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(All in exact order)

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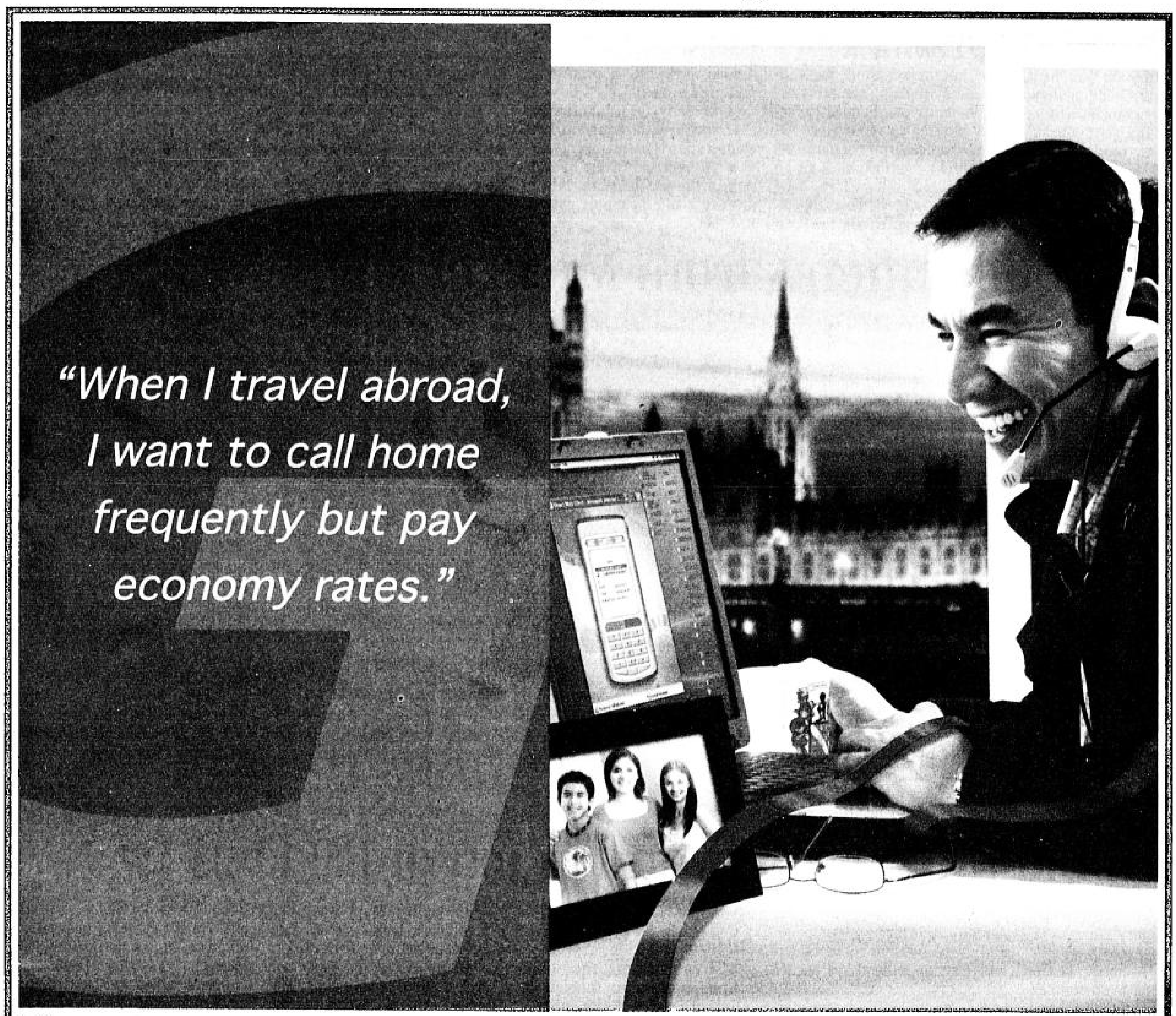
List of returning Filipinos from Lebanon

THE FOLLOWING ARE THE NAMES OF FILIPINOS WHO HAVE RETURNED HERE FROM WAR-TORN LEBANON. THIS LIST INCLUDES THE FIRST BATCH OF OFW ARRIVALS ON JULY 23.

1. ABRIGO, Milagros
2. ABUCAY, Lilibeth
3. ACOSTA, Marilou
4. ADAN, Francia
5. AGARPAO, Lagrimas
6. AGBUYA, Rosalie
7. AGSOY, Lorna
8. AGTANG, Richel
9. ALBARICO, Irene
10. ALI, Sawiya
11. ALLAS, Lolita
12. ALMOGUERA, Rosemarie
13. ALVIOR, Noemi
14. AMPATUAN, Amerah
15. AMPUAN, Sohainah
16. ANCHETA, Leizel
17. ANDAYA, Sonia
18. ANTOQUE, Genevie
19. ARELLANO, Maria Teresita
20. ARIATE, Janette
21. ARROJO, Jocelyn
22. ASSAD, Ari Ariandna Estelle
23. ASSUNCION, Maribel
24. AZUELA, Margie
25. BACCAY, Maya Flor
26. BACTAD, Josephine
27. BALING, Daisy
28. BALINTONG, Rhodesa
29. BARCENA, Elizabeth
30. BARCENAS, Teresita
31. BARIS, Annie
32. BAYDO, Maria Eliza
33. BOLINAS, Rhoda
34. BONDOC, Sandy
35. BORJA, Jackilou
36. BORROMEO, Ma. Evelyn
37. BOSIS, Santas
38. BUENEVENTURA, Maricho
39. BUIZON, Dalisay
40. CABANTAC, Mary Jane
41. CALIX, Marelyn
42. CANSINO, Michelle
43. CARBONEL, Melody
44. CARGO, Milagros
45. CASAGAY, Rosalinda
46. CATUBIG, Victoria
47. CELEDONIO, Janereth
48. CHUA, Marieflor
49. CLARO, Iluminada
50. CONEJOS, Eva
51. CONSULTA, Michelle
52. CORDOVA, Giselle
53. CORPUZ, Patricia
54. CORPUZ, Jocelyn
55. CRUZ, Verna
56. CUARESMA, Marilyn
57. DANGGAY, Hilda
58. DELA CRUZ, Marybeth
59. DELA PENA, Marie Grace
60. DELA RITA, Marichu
61. DELA ROSA, Revelyn
62. DESCALSOTA, Lovelyn
63. DIAZ, Rowena
64. DITAN, Riza
65. DOMINCIL, Chita
66. DOMINGO, Melanie
67. DOROTEO, Normita
68. DUCUSIN, Rose
69. DULDULAO, Geralin
70. ELANGA, Mary Ann
71. ENAGE, Marivic
72. ESCOBARTE, Loreta
73. ESMAIL, Ramia
74. ESMERALDA, Luzviminda
75. FLORES, Jeanette
76. FLORES, Thea Richelle
77. GALENDEZ, Mary Joy
78. GALINGAN, Elisa
79. GALLARDO, Bonifacio
80. GALLENERO, Jona
81. GAMBOA, Cristy
82. GARCIA, Miomi
83. GARCIANO, Merla
84. GELAY, Ana Marie
85. GODWINO, Miriam
86. GOMEZ, Michelle
87. GUARDERAMA, Estela
88. GUILLERMO, Rosemelyn
89. GUINTO, Angelina
90. JESALVA, Ma. Josephine
91. LABTIC, Nerissa
92. LAGADO, Melli
93. LAGUITAN, Cherrylin
94. LAMANILAO, Ana
95. LAZARTE, Flordeliza Grace
96. LIMBALIN, Remedios
97. LINA-AC, Cherryl
98. LOPEZ, Diona
99. LOPEZ, Marilyn
100. LORIEGA, Ellen Joy
101. LUBANGCO, Michelle
102. LUNDAY, Jonalyn
103. MAGBANUA, Salvacion
104. MAGO, Antoinette
105. MAGPILI, Rhobelyn
106. MALICSI, Eloisa
107. MALINAO, Rose
108. MAMARADLO, Asteria
109. MANGIO, ANALIZA
110. MANUEL, Corazon
111. MANUEL, Mariza
112. MARANTAL, Alona Nina
113. MARINE, Janette
114. MARTIN, Emma Ruth
115. MATIENZO, Shirley
116. MALIMO, Mary Grace
117. MELCHOR, Elenor
118. MODESTO, Marilyn
119. MOLINA, Julie
120. MONTENEGRO, Hilda
121. MUSNE, Ruby
122. MUYCO, Mary Grace
123. NACINOPA, Cecilia
124. ONG, Shirley
125. OROCEO, Analie
126. PACARDO, Vanessa Mae
127. PACINO, Jellan
128. PADILLA, Jocelyn
129. PALANGAW, Lydia
130. PARALUAN, Vanisa
131. PALENCIA, Lea
132. PAMA, Geraldine
133. PANINGBATAN, Geraldine
134. PAPONG, Rowena
135. PARENO, Melanie
136. PASANDALAN, Samira
137. PASTOR, Baby Autemia
138. PATALINDAGAT, Lourdes
139. PENASCOSAS, Lorelle
140. PERZ, Hilda
141. PIAMONTE, Marlien
142. PINTO, Mary Ana
143. PONTE, Deborah
144. PORRAS, Evelyn
145. PRESTOZA, Noemi
146. QUIAMBAO, Bella
147. RAMOS, Jovila
148. REBATO, Eva
149. REBUSTE, Melona
150. REDIANG, Donna
151. REQUISO, Josephine
152. REYES, Carmelita
153. REYES, Jury
154. RUBIS, Ruth
155. RUIZ, Lanie
156. SAAVERDA, Philn
157. SABADO, Sally
158. SACOCO, Ederlinda
159. SAIDA, Daud
160. SALAS, Rowena
161. SANTOS, Thelma
162. SARAWI, Settemaleam
163. SARVIDA, Ruth
164. SCHNEIDER, Lita
165. SEBILO, Grace
166. SIASON, Sheila Mae
167. SIMBAHON, Angiefe
168. SOLIVEN, Edelita
169. SULIBAD, Cheryl Rose
170. TALO-TALO, Charina
171. TARON, Maygelyn
172. TATOY, Jenalyn
173. TUANO, Evelyn
174. TUMIBAY, Evangeline
175. UDHOTAN, Amelita
176. UMALI, Mylene
177. USMAN, Mary ann
178. VELASCO, Blessie
179. VILLABITO, Jocelle
180. VILLAFUERTE, Esequilla
181. VILLATOR, Lorna
182. VISTA, Leny
183. YANGUAS, Emma
184. ZAMBOL, Meriam
185. FLORA DAYAP
186. ALEXANDER DAYAP (Infant)
187. GRACE LIDO
188. DONNAH BORNEL
189. CONSTANCIA MENDOZ
190. VIRGINIA SAMSON
191. MARYLIE VELADO
192. DELIA NICOLAS
193. EVANGELINE MAGHINAY
194. MARY JILL TESIPAO
195. LEILANIE ALIT
196. MARY JANE EDNALINO
197. CRISTINA BADILLO
198. ADORA WACGUISAN
199. BIENVENIDA BONSO
200. MYCLE ACBAY
201. ARLENE JIMENEZ
202. VERGIE VALENCIA
203. TERESITA BESANA
204. LORENA BOSANA
205. MATILDE AMATORIO
206. EFREN LIMON
207. CRISTINA ALDAYA
208. GABRIEL ALDAYA (Infant)
209. ANITA OBLINO
210. MARIA DE PAZ
211. MARITES CAYANAN
212. PRISCILA PANTALEON
213. OLIVIA BUNDALIAN
214. HERMINIA TOLENTINO
215. MARIVIC PORRAS
216. SHIREEN PORRAS (Infant)
217. CONCHITA DEL ROSARIO
218. ROSALINA FERNANDEZ
219. PHOEBE PINGOL
220. ROBE PINGOL
221. NORA DORIA
222. LARA DORIA
223. MAGNOLIA MACAUBA
224. JENG JENG ARALY
225. ROWENA MADRESA
226. WILMA CASTANEDA
227. JESETTE ORENCE
228. FELY ESTANO
229. ANNABELLE ZAPE
230. MARLOWE MIRANDA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Mom loses baby after labor; medic may face charges

By DJ Yap

A GYNECOLOGIST IN A QUEZON CITY HOSpital could face criminal charges for allegedly causing a newborn baby to suffocate to death after she put on an adult diaper on the mother while in labor.

The doctor, Glody Tolentino, a consultant at Sta. Teresita General Hospital on D. Tuazon Street, could be held liable for the death of the baby girl who was born earlier than expected and found dead underneath the diaper on Tuesday.

Police believe the baby suffocated to death because of the diaper, which Tolentino had put on the baby's mother, Charlotte Hernandez, 21, hours earlier.

Investigation showed that Hernandez was admitted to the hospital and confined in Room 205 on July 24, with Tolentino, a family friend, attending to her.

At 7 p.m., an initial intra-uterine check-up showed that Hernandez's cervix was dilated by only three cm—still far from the level of dilation expected for childbirth, investigators said.

The physician then placed an adult diaper on Hernandez, according to a report by PO3 Romeo Tandas and PO2 Jaime Jimena.

At around 5 a.m. the following day, another check-up of the mother's cervix revealed that she was dilated by eight cm. The doctor also administered pain reliever shots to the mother, police said.

At this point, Tolentino told Hernandez's mother, Maiden Dumlao, that the patient would be wheeled to the delivery room when the dilation reached 10 cm.

Tolentino returned to the room at about 7 a.m. When she removed the diaper, she and Dumlao were shocked to find that Hernandez had already given birth—but the baby appeared lifeless, police said.

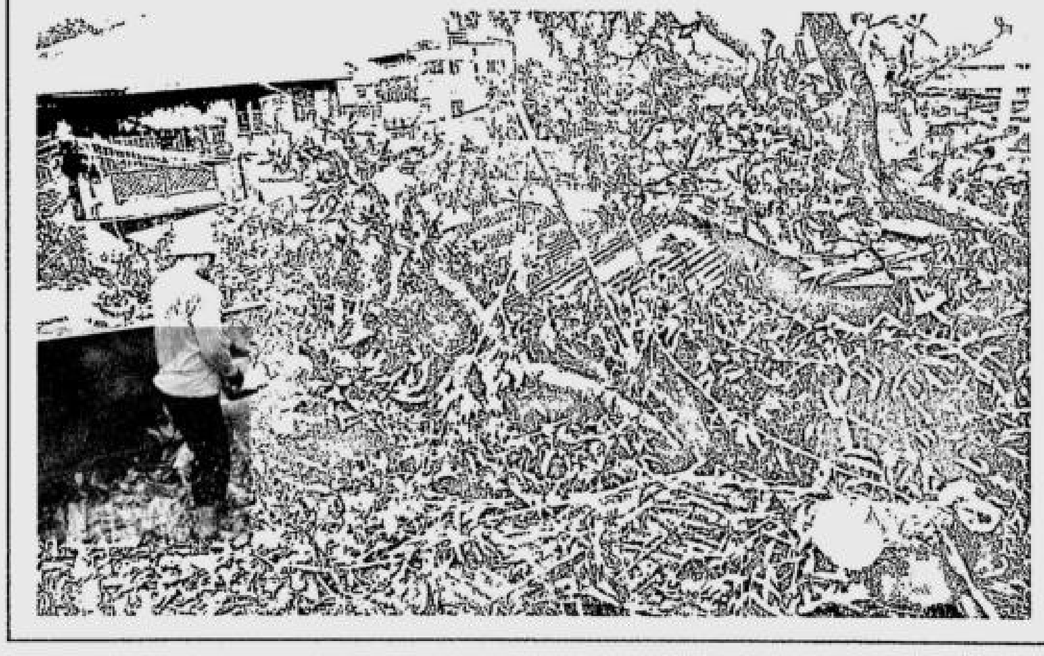
Dumlao tried to shake the baby a little before Tolentino rushed the newborn and her mother to the delivery room where she tried to revive the baby, Tandas and Jimena said.

But the baby, the patient's first-born, was pronounced dead at 7:25 a.m. Her body was taken to the family's house in Dasmariñas, Cavite, police said.

Investigators are trying to convince the family to file infanticide charges against the doctor. But Hernandez seemed reluctant to do so, Tandas said.

Hospital coordinator Dr. Joseph Tortona said the hospital could "not answer" why Tolentino had used a diaper, or why she did not bring the patient to the delivery room earlier. He added that doctors normally did not use diapers but a special underpad for childbirth.

Tortona said Tolentino was a visiting consultant from St. Luke's Medical Center, and was not a resident doctor at the hospital. He also declined to comment on Tolentino's liability, saying the hospital could not speak for her.



GLENDA 'CASUALTY' A man uses a chain saw to cut the branches of a huge tree that fell on shanties in Barangay Sta. Monica, Novaliches, Quezon City yesterday morning. Strong winds uprooted the old tree at the height of Typhoon "Glenda."

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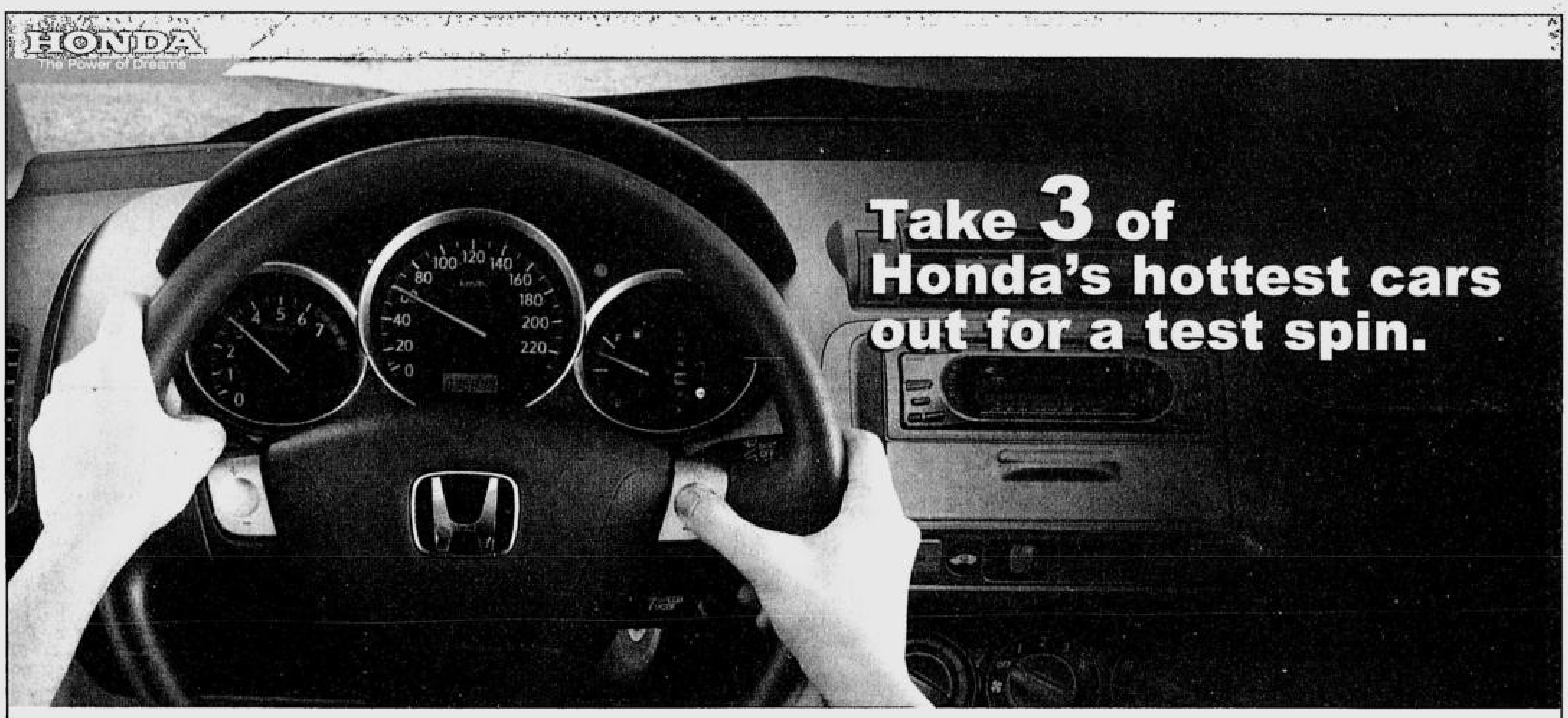

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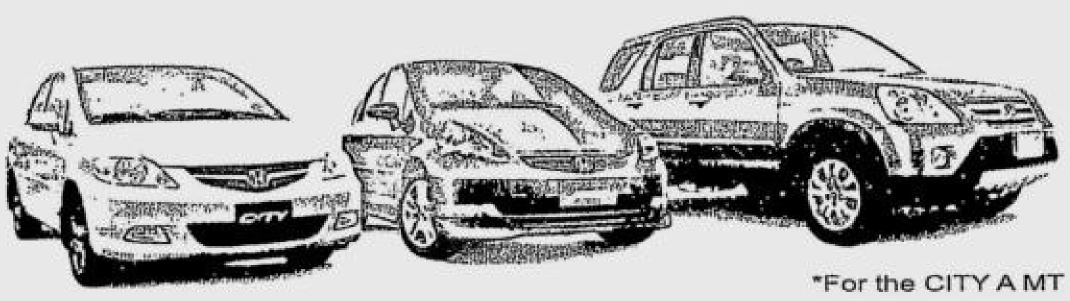

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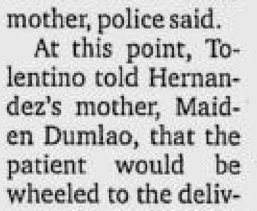

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More evidence coming vs Roldan, policemen vow

By Luige A. del Puerto and Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

THE POLICE HAVE VOWED TO PRESENT more evidence against former actor and Congressman Dennis Roldan whom they arrested for allegedly masterminding the kidnapping of a 3-year-old boy last year.

Roldan was allowed by Judge Agnes Reyes-Carpio of the Pasig Regional Trial Court Branch 261 to post bail the other day, saying the evidence against him was weak.

Prosecutors, meanwhile, said they would ask Carpio to inhibit herself from the case.

A junior officer at the Presidential Anti-Crime and Emergency Response, the country's antikidnapping strike force, said the sentiment among his colleagues was one of disappointment.

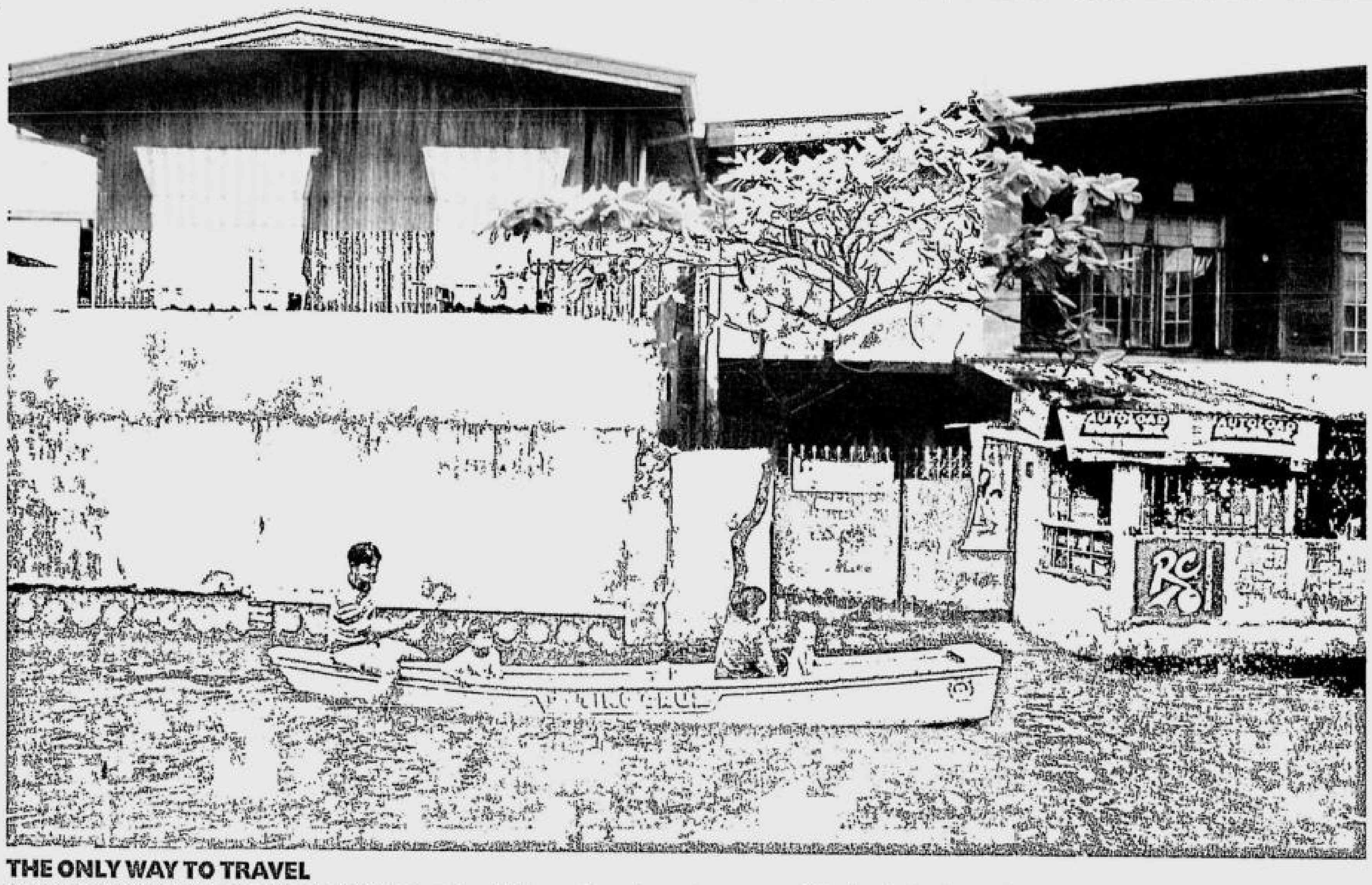
"As far as we know, we did our part. We will have to check what our shortcomings were," the officer said, speaking on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to media.

Philippine National Police chief Director General Oscar Calderon said the court's decision only meant the prosecution would have to present more evidence.

"As far as we are concerned, he is the guilty party," Calderon said. "But we won't be discouraged. We are a bit frustrated. We gave it all only to find out that it was not enough. But that only means we have to gather more to pin down this guy."

Roldan is expected to walk out of jail this morning after posting a P500,000 bail bond for his temporary release. Immigration Commissioner Alipio Fernandez, however, said the actor would remain on the bureau's watch list and will not be allowed to leave the country.

State Prosecutor Philip dela Cruz said they would also file a motion asking the court to reconsider its decision granting Roldan's application for bail. *With Leila B. Salaverria*



THE ONLY WAY TO TRAVEL
A family navigates the flooded streets of Malabon on board a banca, the only way to get around the city during the typhoon season. Many areas in the city remained underwater yesterday, a day after Typhoon "Glenda" made its way out the country.
REM ZAMORA

US will think Joc-Joc Bolante only joking

On Target
Ramon Tulfo

FORMER AGRICULTURE UNDERSECRETARY Jocelyn "Joc-Joc" Bolante is taking the Americans for fools by seeking asylum from the US government, citing as reason communist rebels might kill him.

For giving that stupid reason, he has given the US all the more reason to return him to the Philippines.

Bolante, who faces criminal charges for allegedly embezzling P728 million meant for farmers, said he fears the New People's Army (NPA) which believes that his involvement in the fertilizer scam hurt the farmers.

Bolante forgets that the heirs of former President Marcos, accused of robbing the country blind and jailing and torturing political enemies, have not been killed by the NPAs.

Former First Lady Imelda Marcos, as well as her daughters Imee and Irene and son Bongbong, are still up and about. In fact, Imee and Bongbong have even become public officials.

Bolante might even become a high elective official in the country if he comes back, given the penchant of Filipinos of choosing leaders who buy their votes. So there's no reason the US government will give Bolante asylum. The Americans will say Joc-Joc is only joking.

* * *

An 80-year-old woman is miserable despite the fact that she is wallowing in wealth left by her late husband. Her eldest son has told the court that she's mentally incompetent, another word for crazy. The woman said some of her nine children want to divide the wealth among themselves.

I can't mention the woman's name as well as that of the judge handling the case for fear of being held in contempt and sent to jail.

The woman, who lives alone with her nurse, told me it hurts so much for her eldest son and some of her other children to tell the world she's crazy. The court is having her examined by a psychiatrist. "I'm in complete control of my faculties. Can't they wait, Mon, until I die?" she told me.

* * *

Former police colonel Michael Ray Aquino escaped from justice in the country for the kidnap-murder of publicist Bubby Dacer and his driver, Emmanuel Corbito.

But he's now about to be sentenced to 10 years in prison in the United States after pleading guilty of being an accessory to espionage.

Karma, the law of retribution and reward, has worked for Michael Ray Aquino. His accomplices in the Dacer-Corbito kidnap-murder who are still out of prison will be overtaken by karma sooner or later.

* * *

I went yesterday to the Cardinal Santos Memorial Hospital to have my foot treated for a sports injury by Dr. Tyrone Reyes. I found this poem pasted on the wall of the rehabilitation medicine at the hospital and I'd like to share it with you:

"I asked God for strength that I might achieve,
"I was made weak that I might learn humbly to obey;
"I asked God for health that I might do great things,
"I was given infirmity that I might do great things;
"I asked for riches that I might be happy,
"I was given poverty that I might be wise;
"I asked for power that I might have the praise of men
"I was given weakness that I might feel the need of God
"I asked for all things that I may enjoy life
"I was given life that I might enjoy all things;
"I got nothing that I asked for but everything that I hoped for
"Almost despite myself my unspoken prayers were answered
"I am among all men (women) most richly blest."

Binay asks SPD to bring back chief to old post

By Jocelyn R. Uy and Tarra V. Quismundo

MAKATI MAYOR JEJOMAR BINAY YESTERDAY asked for the reinstatement of his city's police chief, as he insisted that police officials were responsible for Senior Supt. Marietto Valerio's relief.

Speaking at a press conference yesterday, Binay told reporters that Valerio's superiors at the Southern Police District (SPD), which has jurisdiction over the Makati police, should return him back to his old post, if indeed, as they claim, the police chief was not relieved.

"He should be allowed to return to his post. What was his fault? Police officers who do their work properly are those that get into trouble. That's the reason why the police force loses its credibility," Binay said.

Sought for comment, Senior Supt. Ricardo Padilla, the new SPD director, said, "We will bring him back to Makati City. It's not a problem."

"I did not sign any relief order," he added.

Padilla reiterated, however, that Valerio had not been relieved from his post but had gone on emergency leave, coincidentally, on the same night his men arrested Roberto Brillante, Binay's political rival.

Brillante was arrested last week after a Makati court found him guilty of uttering libelous remarks against Binay in a radio broadcast 11 years ago. He has been released after filing an appeal.

Valerio is expected to return to work two weeks from now since he filed a request to go on emergency leave initially for five days, "plus another 15 days," Padilla said.

MetroBriefs

Explosion kills worker

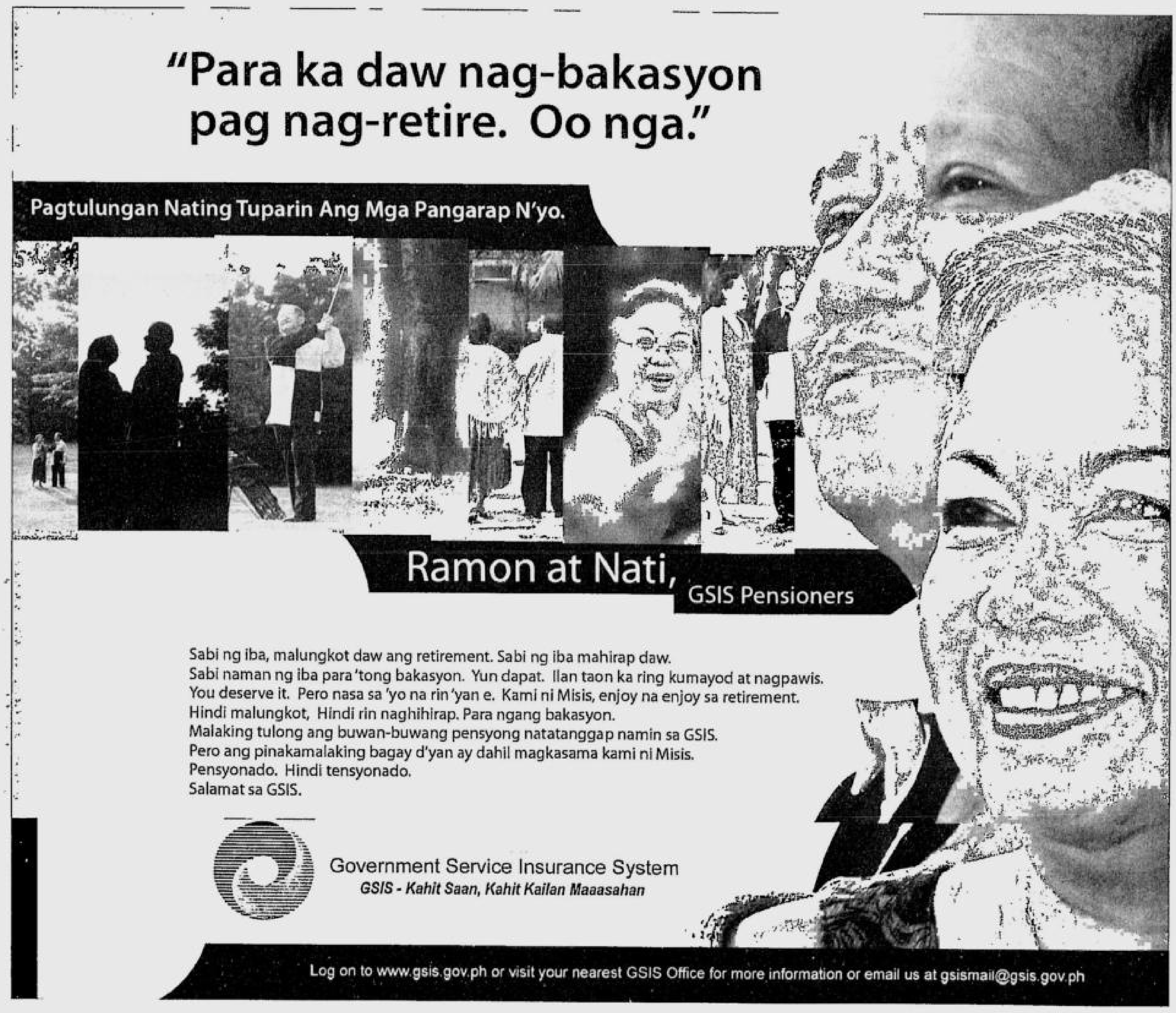
A FACTORY worker was killed when a boiler in a furniture factory in Dalandanan, Valenzuela City overheated and exploded early yesterday morning. Northern Police District director, Chief Supt. Leopoldo Bataoil, identified the victim as Rodrigo Villasis, 31, an employee of Extensive Wood Corp. located at Km. 15 along McArthur Highway. "He died on the spot of severe burns and multiple injuries," Bataoil said. *Nancy C. Carvajal*

2 kids saved from river

TWO CHILDREN were rescued yesterday afternoon when they accidentally fell into the Marikina River in Barangay Malanday, barangay officer Teody Eusebio said. But rescue operations were still ongoing to locate a fisherman who also fell into the waters. Eusebio said Nino Balio, 27, disappeared into the river while fishing at about 1 a.m. yesterday. *Edson C. Tandoc Jr.*

Did You Know

METRO Manila is the second most populated region in the Philippines, as of the latest data. The data also shows that of the 76.5 million persons in the country, about 13 percent or 9.9 million are in the National Capital Region. Region IV (Southern Tagalog) is the most populated with 11.8 million residents. The least inhabited of the 16 regions is the Cordillera Administrative Region with 1.4 million residents.
Cyril L. Bonabente, PDI Research



"Para ka daw nag-bakasyon pag nag-retire. Oo nga."

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Ramon at Nati, GSIS Pensioners

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Israeli raid kills 4 UN observers

Hezbollah vows to launch rocket attacks deep into Israel

BEIRUT—AN ISRAELI AIR RAID ON SOUTH Lebanon killed as many as four UN observers Tuesday, overshadowing an international crisis meeting due to open in Rome, as Hezbollah vowed to fire rockets further into the heart of Israel.

The deaths, which UN chief Kofi Annan said were the result of Israel's "apparently deliberate targeting" of a UN post, also drew a strong protest from France, whose officers currently command the nearly 30-year-old UN force.

"I am shocked and deeply distressed by the apparently deliberate targeting by Israeli Defense Forces of a UN observer post in southern Lebanon that has killed two UN military observers, with two more feared dead," Annan said in a statement released in Rome.

French ambassador Jean-Marc de La Sabliere, president of the UN Security Council for July, said: "We condemn this bombing on a UNIFIL position." The attack on the UN post in the hilltop town of Khiam, once the site of an infamous Israeli jail but now a Hezbollah stronghold, came amid an intensive bombardment of the border area as Israeli troops advanced further into Lebanon.

Fierce fighting was reported as Israeli troops took the town of Bint Jbeil, another bastion of the Shiite militant group.

Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah vowed to hit back with rocket attacks into the heart of Israel as he made a new television appearance early Wednesday following repeated unsuccessful attempts by Israel to kill him in bombing raids.

"We are entering a new phase in the confrontation, the phase of (striking) beyond Haifa," Nasrallah told his group's Al-Manar television.

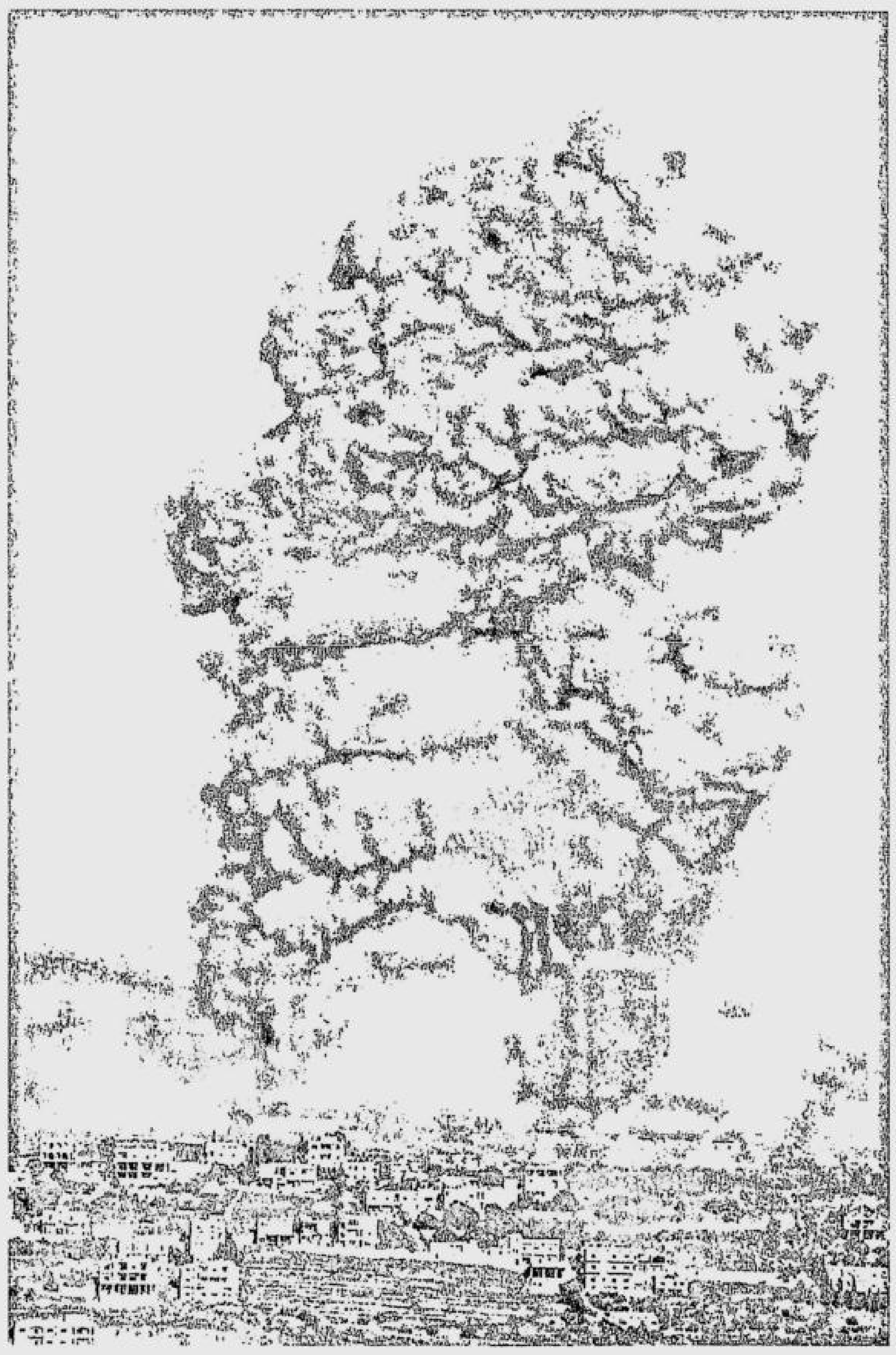
Israel has repeatedly said it believes Hezbollah has longer-range rockets capable of reaching beyond Israel's third city, as far as the commercial capital Tel Aviv, or even the southern city of Beersheva.

Warplanes also bombed the southern suburbs of the Lebanese capital, as Israel effectively ruled out any chance of a rapid ceasefire to end the two-week-old Lebanon conflict.

That bombardment ended a 24-hour lull that coincided with a lightning visit to the region by US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

"Israel is determined to carry on the fight against Hezbollah," Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said at a press conference with Rice. "We are not fighting the Lebanese government or the Lebanese people. We are fighting against Hezbollah." Rice, who later left the region for the Rome crisis talks, said it was "time for a new Middle East" and underlined the US stance that an immediate ceasefire would only put off a long-term settlement.

"A durable solution will be one that strengthens the forces of peace and democracy in the region," she said. *AFP*



SMOKE BILLOWS in the town of Khiam, in southern Lebanon, Tuesday after Israeli air raids. Israeli troops sealed off a Hezbollah stronghold and warplanes killed six people in a market, while Beirut was pounded by new airstrikes. Guerrillas fired rockets at northern Israel, killing a girl. AP

Egypt, Saudi fear wider war

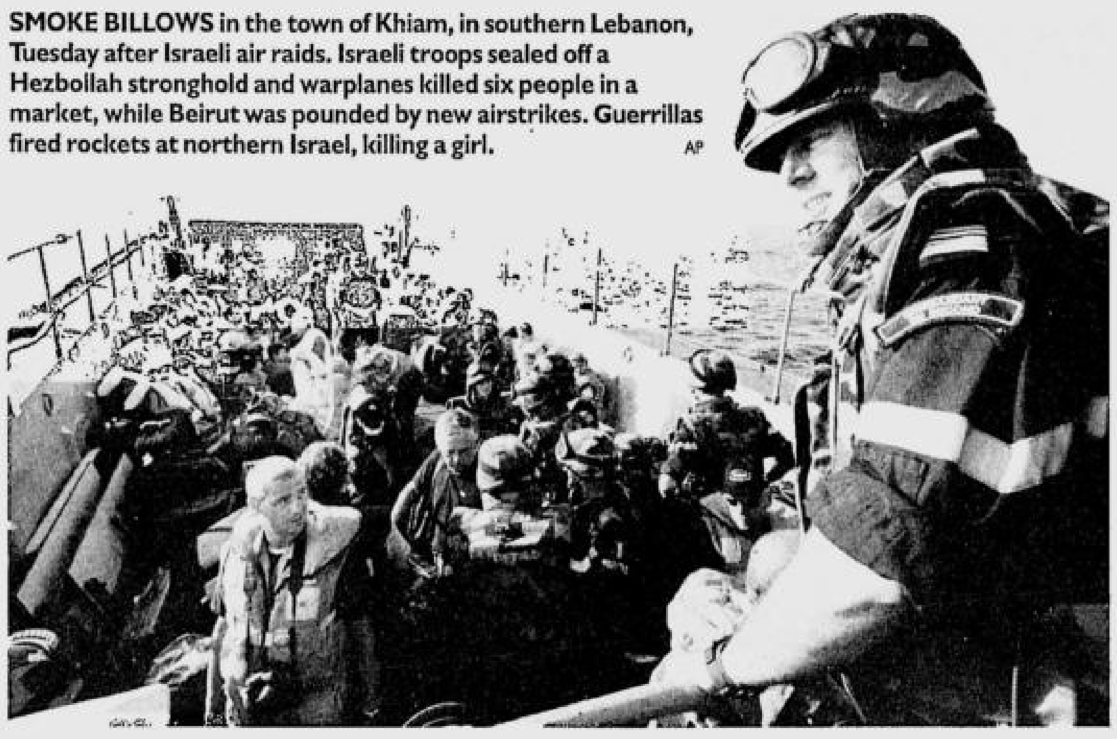
RIYADH—EGYPT AND SAUDI Arabia, facing popular anger over Israel's offensive in Lebanon, toughened their stance on Tuesday, warning the United States that Israeli militarism could lead to a wider conflict in the region.

"Saudi Arabia warns everybody that if the peace option fails because of Israeli arrogance, there will be no other option but war," state-owned media quoted Saudi's King Abdullah as saying before a meeting with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

His remarks were unusually forthright for the world's top oil exporter, which has called for ceasefire but blamed Lebanon's Hezbollah guerrilla group for the crisis that has so far killed at least 413 people in Lebanon and 42 Israelis.

The comments also appeared to be aimed at the United States, Israel's ally which has resisted calls for an immediate ceasefire.

Analysts say Washington's Arab allies, including Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Jordan, fear popular anger against Israel could escalate and force them to take a tougher stance. *Reuters*



YOUNG CASUALTY. A 4-year-old Palestinian girl, Suad Habeb, lies dead in a bed at al-Shifa hospital (left) but 66 foreigners (right) are lucky as they get evacuated on a French navy boat out of the southern Lebanse town of Naqura. AFP/AP

Typhoon slams into southeast China

BEIJING—TYPHOON KAEMI struck the southeast coast of China on Tuesday, sparking the evacuation of more than 700,000 people in an area still reeling from a tropical storm that claimed over 600 lives.

The typhoon—which first passed over Taiwan, causing widespread disruption to daily life but not enormous damage—struck mainland China's Fujian province at 3:50 p.m., the official Xinhua news agency said.

State television showed footage of torrential rains lashing Fuzhou, a major city in Fujian, as workers struggled to fasten power cables and make other preparations for the onslaught of the typhoon.

With the storm packing winds of up to 120 kilometers (74 miles) per hour as it approached, more than 643,000 people were evacuated from Fujian, Xinhua said, while another 80,000 were moved from their homes in neighboring Zhejiang province.

Kaemi, which means "ant" in Korean, pounded Taiwan with strong winds and heavy rain after making landfall there late Monday, leaving four people slightly injured when the bus they were in was hit by falling rocks.

The typhoon also forced the cancellation of flights in Taiwan, disrupted road traffic, knocked out power for thousands of residents and forced some offices to close.

Kaemi had earlier brushed past the Philippines, causing heavy rain there, with schools closed and more than 2,600 people evacuated in and around Manila on Tuesday due to heavy flooding.

A total of 435,000 people were evacuated in Fujian, including those working in fish farms on the sea. *AFP*

US nat'l parks in peril due to global warming

WASHINGTON—GLOBAL WARMING puts 12 of the most famous US national parks at risk, environmentalists said on Tuesday, conjuring up visions of Glacier National Park without glaciers and Yellowstone Park without grizzly bears.

All 12 parks are located in the American West, where temperatures have risen twice as fast as in the rest of the United States over the last 50 years, said Theo Spencer of the Natural Resources Defense Council.

"Rising temperatures, drought, wildfires and diminished snowfalls endanger wildlife and threaten hiking, fishing and other recreational activities" in the parks, Spencer said in a telephone news conference. "Imagine Glacier Park without glaciers or Yellowstone without any grizzly bears." Most climate scientists believe Earth's surface temperature has risen over the last century or more, spurred by human activities that produce greenhouse gases, which trap heat like the glass walls of a greenhouse.

The report released by the council and the Rocky Mountain Climate Organization stressed the connection between global warming and environmental damage at the parks, including the loss of specific wildlife, and called on the US government to cut greenhouse gas emissions significantly in 10 years. *Reuters*

More US, Iraq troops head for Baghdad

WASHINGTON—PRESIDENT George W. Bush and Iraq's prime minister agreed on Tuesday that more US and Iraqi troops will go to Baghdad to try to curb sectarian violence that has raised fears the country is sliding into full-scale civil war.

"God willing, there will be no civil war in Iraq," Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki said.

The new security plan was an acknowledgment that Maliki's attempt to pacify Baghdad had failed, with hundreds of people killed in sectarian violence every week.

A senior US defense official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the plan involves sending thousands of additional US and Iraq troops into the Baghdad area, but did not say how many Americans would be involved.

Pentagon spokesperson Eric Ruff said that "no final decision has been made" on how many additional forces will be sent.

Bush, at a news conference with Maliki that lacked much warmth, said troops going to Baghdad in coming weeks would be pulled from areas in Iraq deemed relatively free of violence. *Reuters*

Trade talks collapse blamed on US polls

WASHINGTON—A BATTLE FOR control of the US Congress may have contributed to the collapse of world trade talks this week by making the Bush administration reluctant to offer deeper farm subsidy cuts, analysts said.

"The administration didn't want to be perceived as putting those subsidies on the chopping block," said Viji Rangaswami, a trade and development associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and former congressional aide.

The world trade talks, known officially as the Doha Development Agenda, began nearly five years ago with the goal of helping poor countries prosper from trade.

They collapsed on Monday after a weekend meeting between the United States, the European Union, Brazil, India, Japan and Australia failed to resolve long-standing differences.

Despite the demands of many nations, Washington refused to offer deeper cuts in the subsidies it pays farmers. US trade officials said they were prepared to deal but other countries were not offering steep enough tariff cuts to warrant a new US move.

The impasse spared the Bush administration from striking a potentially unpopular deal in farm country just a few months before congressional election in November.

The United States now spends about $20 billion annually on trade-distorting farm subsidies.

It has offered to cut its WTO allowance for the main US farm subsidy programs by 60 percent to $7.6 billion but trading partners say other elements of the proposal would still allow Washington to spend about $23 billion each year. *Reuters*

TERRIBLE TODDLER

Emily Griggs has no idea her candy sucker has stuck to her dress as she munches on a chocolate waffle ice cream cone Sunday in Enid, Oklahoma. AP

More and more people getting too obese for X-rays, scanners

WASHINGTON—MORE AND MORE obese people are unable to get full medical care because they are either too big to fit into scanners, or their fat is too dense for X-rays or sound waves to penetrate, radiologists reported on Tuesday.

With 64 percent of the US population either overweight or obese, the problem is worsening, but it represents a business opportunity for equipment makers and hospitals, said Dr. Raul Uppot, a radiologist at Massachusetts General Hospital.

"We noticed over the past couple of years that obesity was playing a role in our ability to see these images clearly," Uppot said in a telephone interview.

Radiologists have their own term for it when writing up reports: "These images are limited due to body habitus." Uppot's team looked for this phrase in radiology reports from 1989 to 2003. These included standard X-rays, computer assisted X-rays known as CT scans, magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and positron emission tomography (PET).

These scans are used to look for tumors, blood clots, broken limbs and other injuries and diseased organs.

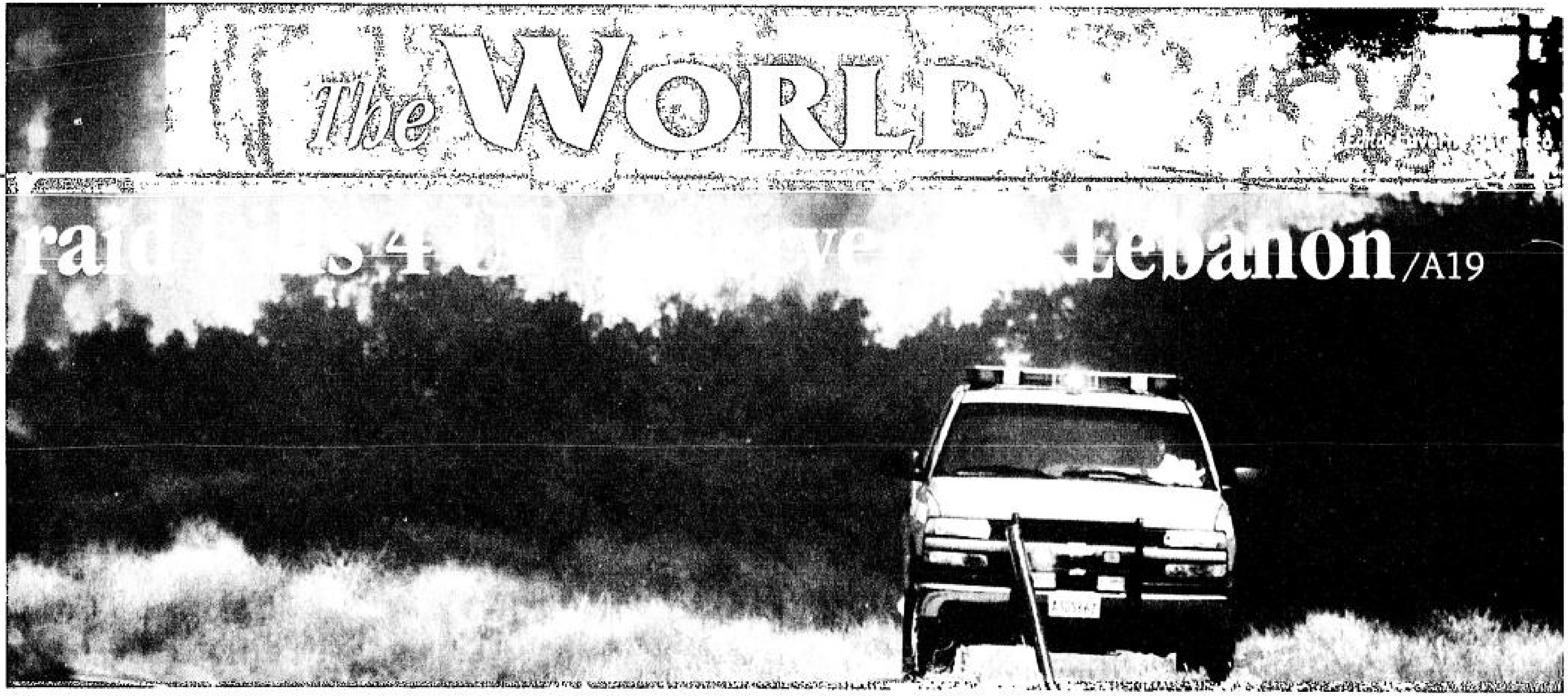
"Overall, 7,778 or 0.15 percent of 5,253,014 reports were habitus limited," they wrote in the August issue of the journal Radiology.

"It essentially doubled over the last 15 years," Uppot said.

The researchers looked more closely at the records of 200 of the patients, who weighed, on average, 239 pounds (108 kg).

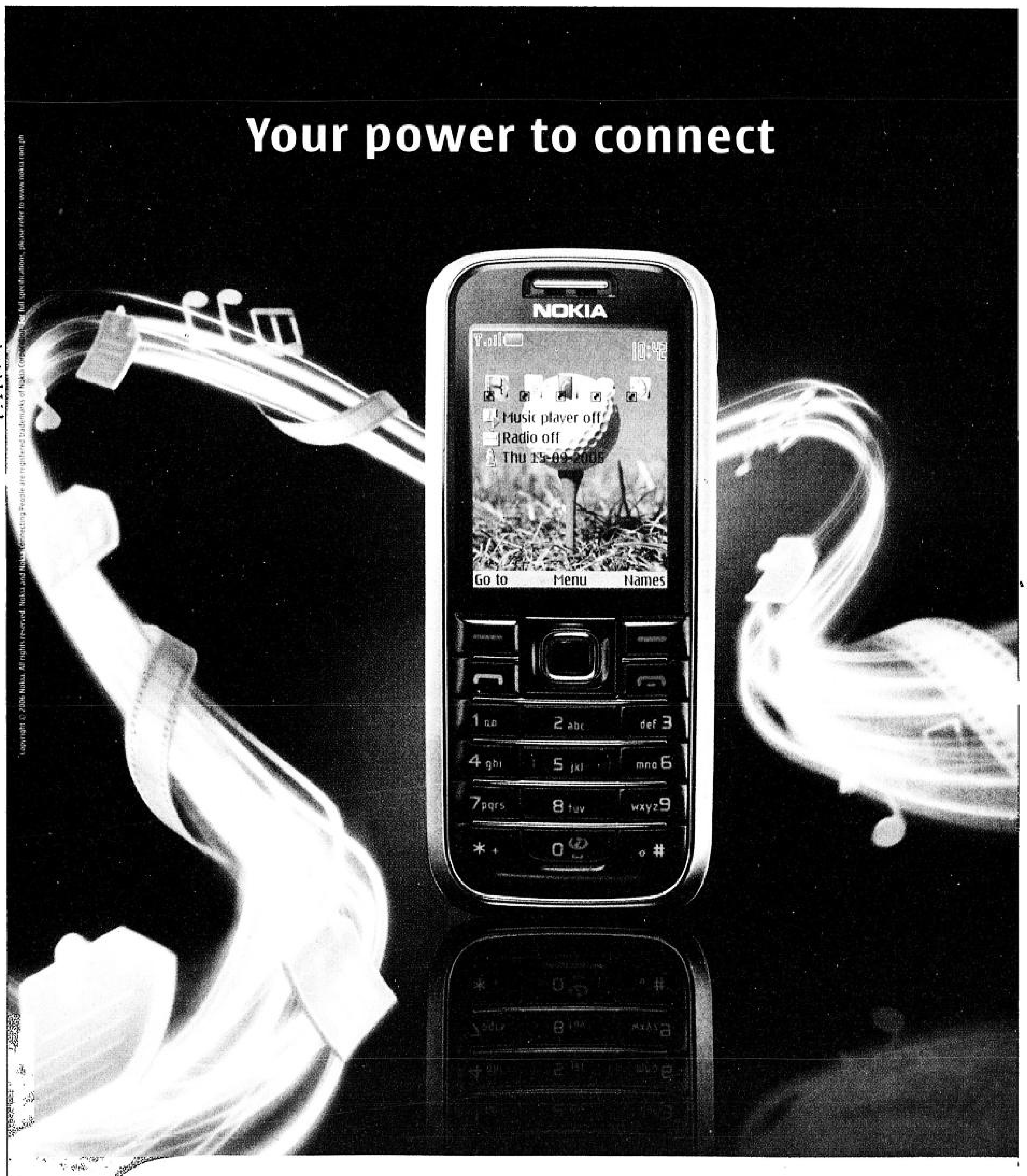
"It is a major issue because ... the patient may still have a tumor, the patient may have appendicitis, the patient may have other inflammatory processes," Uppot said.

"This is affecting radiologists all over the country." Ultrasounds are most affected, Uppot said. *Reuters*



Israeli ra[illegible]s 4 [illegible] ve[illegible] Lebanon/A19

CALIFORNIA BURNING
A fire-fighting vehicle moves up a road and away from the flames on the south flank of a fast-moving wildfire east of San Diego, California Tuesday. The fire has burned more than 15,400 acres over three days while firefighters struggled to control it. Several neighborhoods have been evacuated.
REUTERS



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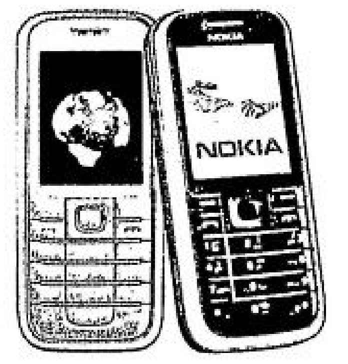

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Nokia N70 Scoops Top Industry Accolade

World's Top Selling 3G Device Named 'Best Mobile Entertainment Handset'

Espoo, Finland - Nokia today announced that the Nokia N70 multimedia computer has been awarded 'Best Mobile Entertainment Handset' at the annual Mobile Entertainment Awards, the Meffys. The device beat off stiff competition to take the top spot at this industry awards ceremony held in London.

The Nokia N70 perfectly illustrates Nokia's commitment to offering powerful, all-inclusive handsets that aid people in their daily lives. In addition to a range of smartphone features including web browsing and email, it is also a pocketable entertainment device. Users can take high quality photos with its 2 megapixel camera, listen to music on the integrated digital music player and stream video over 3G.

The Meffys, organised by the Mobile Entertainment Forum, are the industry's official benchmark for measuring success and rewarding innovating in mobile entertainment. The top entries in each category were chosen by a panel of independent industry, media and analyst experts and the winners were announced by top DJ Pete Tong at a ceremony coinciding with the Mobile Entertainment Market (MEM) 2006 in London in May.

Patrick Parodi, MEF Global Chair, commented: "The 2006 Meffys have been a fiercely contested event with a wealth of high quality entries. The winners reflect the hot trends which will be shaping and driving the mobile entertainment industry forward in the coming year."

"This award is a fantastic endorsement for the underlining strategy behind the Nokia Nseries in terms of offering one single device for consumers to enjoy entertainment whenever and wherever they want," commented Tapio Hedman, senior vice president, marketing, Multimedia, Nokia. "The Nokia N70 is the top seller within the Nokia Nseries range of multimedia computers and we are delighted that the industry has recognised the full range of entertainment features it offers consumers."

For further information on the Mobile Entertainment Awards 2006, please visit www.m-e-f.org

ADVT.

WHAT'S INSIDE

US names 15-man roster to world basketball/A24

SPORTS

E-mail: pr_sports@inquirer.com.ph

Editor **Teddyvic S. Melendres**

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9 RP cue bets advance

UNITED STATES-BASED SANTOS SAMBAJON ripped five foes Wednesday to tow eight other Filipinos into the third round of the rich International Pool Tour 8-Ball North American Open at the Venetian Hotel in Las Vegas.

Sambajon conquered former world pool trick-shot champion Fabio Petronio (8-1) of Italy, American Jeremy Jones (8-3), the UK's Darren Appleton (8-5), Bobby Hunter (8-7) of the US and compatriot Edwin Montal (8-7).

But Southeast Asian Games gold medal winner Gandy Valle was eliminated along with Montal.

Valle, also the 2005 SMB Asian 9-Ball Tour winner, wound up with a 2-3 record in Group 48, while Montal's loss to Sambajon was one of four he absorbed in the round. They, however, still went home with $5,000 (around P260,000).

"Amang" Parica and Warren Kiamco were the first Filipino casualties Saturday, consoling themselves with the $2,000 (around P104,000) reserved for starters in the $2-million event.

SAMBAJON

REYES

The 45-year-old Sambajon, who plays out of North Terrace, California, assured himself of at least $10,000 (around P520,000) like Efren "Bata" Reyes, Django Bustamante, Marlon Manalo and qualifiers Rodolfo "Boy Samson" Luat, Alex Pagulayan, Antonio Lining, Dennis Orcollo and Ronnie Alcano.

Reyes and Bustamante advanced with identical 4-1 records in Group 45 along with American Dee Adkins. Orcollo, Alcano, Manalo and Luat tallied 4-1 records.

The 2002 Singapore Asian 8-ball winner and 2004 World Fujairah 8-ball champion, Reyes nipped Andreja Klasovic (8-4) of Serbia and Montenegro and American Jonathan Macias (8-2) before losing to American Dee Adkins, 7-8, on Tuesday. He bounced back by demolishing Philip Harrison (8-2) of Switzerland and nipping Bustamante (8-6) yesterday.

Manalo's victims were Wayne Catledge (8-3), Loree Jon Jones (8-1), Marko Lohtander (8-4) and legendary 8-ball star Mike Sigel (8-5) to fin-

9 RP/A24

Soaring Eagles take on skidding Tams

GAMES TODAY (*Ninoy Aquino Stadium*)
2 p.m.—NU vs UE
4 p.m.—Ateneo vs FEU

COACH NORMAN BLACK DOESN'T mind if people attribute Ateneo's winning streak to luck.

All he's thinking about now is to keep that streak alive when the Eagles face the skidding defending champion Far Eastern Tamaraws in the UAAP basketball tournament today at the Ninoy Aquino Stadium.

The Eagles and the Tamaraws collide at 4 p.m. with the Tams seeking to end a three-game slump.

"We're 3-0 and I'm very happy," said Black after Ateneo pulled off a 73-72 squeaker against Adamson. "I don't know what the expectations are from other people, but my expectations are to try to win games. The idea is to win as many games as possible and peak at the right time."

The University of the East Warriors and the National Bulldogs, with contrasting fortunes the past week, will square off at 2 p.m.

Tailenders in the last five seasons, the Bulldogs just scored the biggest upset in the tournament with a 73-64 triumph over the Tamaraws last Saturday.

But coach Manny Dandan is far from declaring his Bulldogs as title contenders.

"We have very realistic goals," said Dandan, who steered NU to the Final Four in 2001. "We're not trying to say that (the win against FEU) was a statement game. The boys are just working hard every game and [want] to earn that respect back."

A loss to the Santo Tomas Tigers also didn't change UE coach Dindo Pumaren's perspective.

"The team's confidence is intact," said Pumaren. *Jasmine W. Payo*

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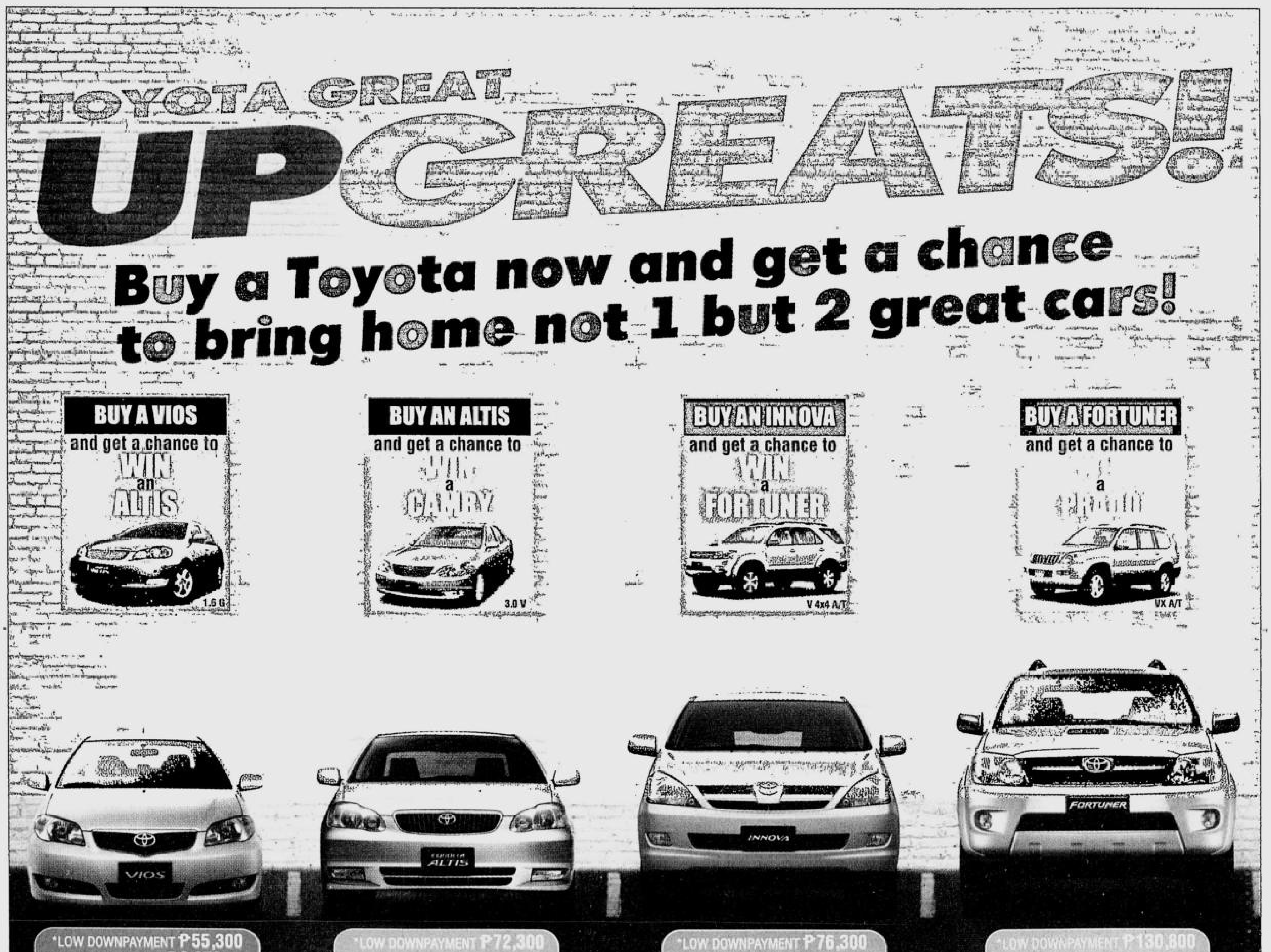

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TOYOTA moving forward

POC wants programs from NSAs

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THE PHILIPPINE OLYMPIC COMMITTEE yesterday instructed all national sports associations to come up with their respective planning programs that will be presented to their prospective corporate sponsors.

The program, according to the POC directive issued during its recent expanded executive council meeting, must detail the plan of action of each NSAs with regard to sports development, including training and competitions.

It must be appetizing enough for the private sponsors to pledge support for the NSAs like what they did—through the initiative of First Gentleman Mike Arroyo—during the 2005 Southeast Asian Games and other international competitions before that.

POC secretary general Steve Hontiveros said the planning program must not only include the Doha Asian Games this December but also a road map en route to the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

"If they don't have sports planning programs, they can't have funding from the private sector," said Hontiveros.

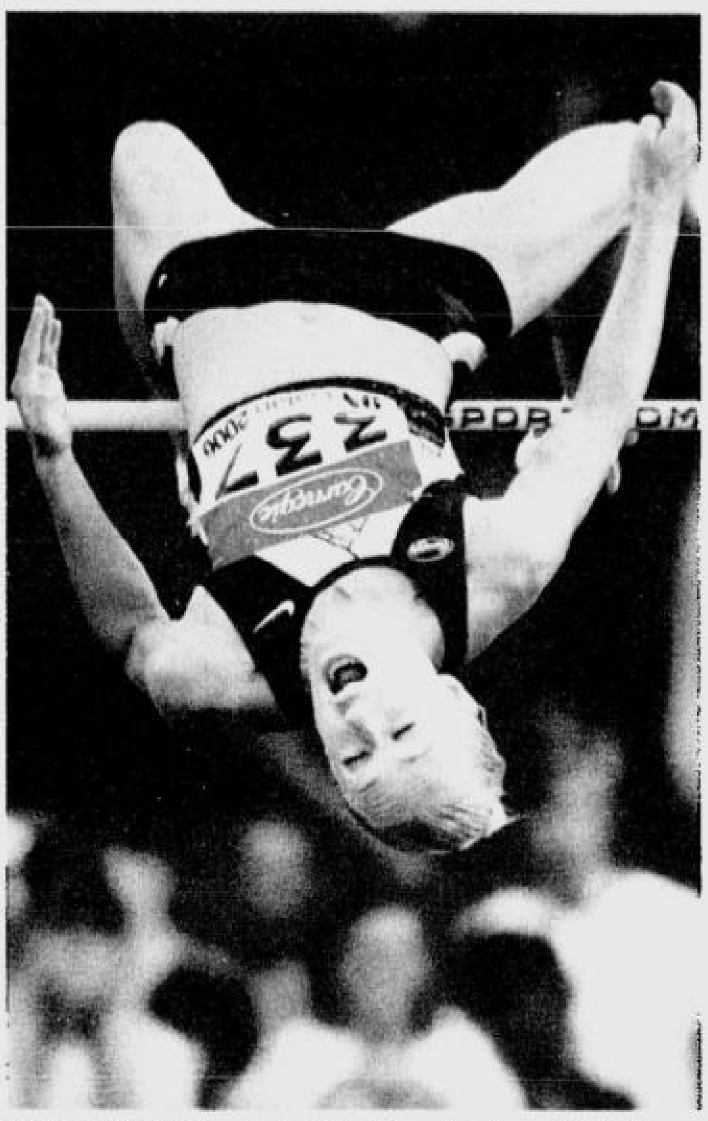
The POC directive is seen as a last-ditch resort to tap private support for the coming Asian Games after its appeal to Mr. Arroyo to again spearhead a fund-raising drive to finance the training of the RP bets fell on deaf ears.

The First Gentleman, who helped raise P160 million for the SEAG campaign, has decided to stay away from RP sports this year after receiving criticisms, instead of praise, for his role in last year's unprecedented SEAG championship drive.

With the snub, the POC decided to name chair Butch Ramirez of Philippine Sports Commission as RP Asiad chef de mission.

POC president Peping Cojuangco had earlier said the private sector is willing to help as long as there is a concrete plan of action by the NSAs. Among those who have expressed willingness to help, according to the POC chief, is Smart-PLDT boss Manny V. Pangilinan.

The Philippines is set to send more than 200 athletes to Qatar this December. While accommodations will be shouldered by the Doha organizers, the POC fears that the P30 million allotted by the PSC for the training and actual competition may not be enough.



OVER THE BAR: Sweden's Kajsa Bergqvist clears the bar in the women's high jump of the DN Galan athletic meet being held at the Olympic Stadium in Stockholm, Sweden, on Tuesday. She won the event with a leap of 2.02 meters. REUTERS

RP-Air21 thumps Malaysia for title

ZHONGSHAN, CHINA—RP-AIR21 CRUSHED MALAYSIA, 93-70, TUESDAY TO CAPTURE the inaugural Dr. Sun Yat Sen Cup international invitational basketball championship before an overflow crowd at the Zhongshan gymnasium here.

A favorite whipping boy by the Philippines in the Southeast Asian Games, the Malaysians were in the game only in the first quarter as the Filipino pros, despite playing with only eight men, took the half at 52-31.

Mark Telan, the most consistent player in the team, showed the way for the Filipinos with 20 points, including nine in the first quarter.

Reigning PBA slam dunk champion K.G. Canaleta and Leo Avenido added 16 points apiece, followed by Ryan Bernardo with 13, Ronald Tubid with 11 and Bruce Dacia with 10.

The Filipinos, supported by the Basketball Association of the Philippines (BAP) and sponsored by Burlington, Accel and Federal Tyres, won the four-team tournament two days after placing fourth in the tough Eastcolight-Super Kung Sheung Cup in Hong Kong.

Aside from the finely crafted championship trophy, RP-Air21 also picked up the top prize of ¥40,000 (about P280,000) for winning the tournament held in honor of the late patriot and political leader born here in Zhongshan.

Malaysia, represented by its national team, pocketed ¥30,000.

Third place went to the United States-based Asian-American Sports Club, which downed the Zhongshan Selection of China, 85-74.

"We're very, very happy to win the title. This is another big achievement for the team," said RP-Air21 mentor Johny Tam, who shared the coaching chores with Bo Perasol.

The two coaches, who received a congratulatory message from BAP president Joey Lina, acknowledged the support of Bert Lina and Lito Alvarez of Air21, Ruddy Tan of Burlington, Philip Go and Willy Ortiz of Accel and Ronnie Co of Federal Tyres.

Earlier Tuesday, the RP-Air21 team and the rest of the participants had a brief tour of the city, which included a visit to Dr. Sun Yat Sen's residence-museum.

The Filipinos, who played minus skipper Wynne Arboleda, who sustained an injury, and brothers Yancy and Ranidel de Ocampo, who flew back home following the untimely death of their father, were scheduled to return at 9 last night via Cebu Pacific.

The scores:

RP-AIR21 93—Telan 20, Canaleta 16, Avenido 16, Bernardo 13, Tubid 11, Dacia 10, Se 4, Padilla 3.

MALAYSIA 80—Ooi Ban Sin 23, Cheong Yow Keen 12, Ng Thiam Hong 8, Tam Hoong 8, Soo Eng Heng 6, Koh Way Tek 5, Abdul Kader 3, Tan Wei Wu 2, F. Loh 2, Satyaseelqan 1.

Quarters: 25-20, 52-31, 78-50, 93-70.

Tiu bests Jota, tightens race

ROSARIO, BATANGAS—JONATHAN TIU OF Team Ere bested arch rival Dave Jota of Blanche Racing in the final face-off to capture the premiere Quick 8 crown recently in the fourth leg of the 2006 Red Horse National Drag Racing Championship at the Drag Strip of the Batangas Racing Circuit here.

The win tightened up the fight between Tiu and Jota for the Drag Racing Driver of the Year award in the event sanctioned by the Automobile Association Philippines.

Jota jumpstarted, thus losing the race by red light as Tiu coasted to the finish line clocking 21.022 seconds. Tiu now holds a total of 30 points, just 10 points behind Jota who has 40.

A total of 101 drivers competed in the event sponsored by Red Horse Beer, San Miguel Corp. and supported by Pilipinas Shell, Denso, Yokohama, Casino Filipino and Sparco.

Heavy rains forced organizers to postpone the Pro class semifinal stage. The Pro class race will resume on the next leg set Aug. 26.

The other winners were Danes Sarmiento of Pit 21 and Ian Verdeflor of Goodguys Dragsports. Sarmiento clocked 14.999 seconds to clinch the Sportsman Class at the expense of Vic Mallare of Team Ready (16.158). Verdeflor bested Mark Amurao of Just Racing in the Hotstreet division.

CHAMPS: Ozamiz City officials and players, led by Mayor Reynaldo Parojinog, team manager Mike Ochate and coach Albert Calvo, jubilate after Ozamiz Cotta copped the Guerrero Brandy-NBC national basketball crown for the second straight year at the expense of Pagadian City.

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Eala looks at two firms in wake of banner year

By June Navarro

EVERY TIME THE PHILIPPINE BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION PRODUCES a banner year, plans to expand the league inevitably comes up.

Commissioner Noli Eala has opened exploratory talks with two respectable local companies in a bid to increase the number of teams in the league following the huge success of the 2005-2006 season.

Major turnarounds in gate receipts, attendance and television ratings have contributed immensely to the big success that has made the PBA more attractive to potential sponsors.

"There are two companies which expressed interest but I don't want to reveal them at this time," Eala told the INQUIRER.

Eala hinted that one of the companies is into sports except basketball while the other has been contemplating on building up its brand name in the PBA.

Thoughts of expanding the league cropped up following outgoing PBA chair Ely Capacio's year-end accomplishment report.

Capacio stressed that marked improvements in gate receipts, attendance and television ratings contributed to the increase in the league's total revenues that could reach as high as P26 million.

"Pursuant to sound fiscal management, we are expecting that the net adjusted income of the PBA will more than double from last season," said Capacio.

"Upon review of the current performance indicators and pending final accounting, we are projecting total revenues to grow by P26 million," he added.

Capacio, who will give way to Ricky Vargas of Talk 'N Text as chair next season, noted that the increase in live attendance was the biggest contributing factor. Games turnout in Metro Manila increased by 74.13 percent or from 423,701 to 737,782—a jump of more than 314,000 people.

NOLI Eala: Exploratory talks

RICKY Vargas: New chair

He said the average game attendance for the 2005-06 season was 6,647, an increase of about 63.15 percent from the 2004-05 season and total turnout this year is the highest since the 1997 season.

Despite the loss of the Shell franchise, the PBA managed to increase the number of gamedays from 104 last season to 111 this year or a 6.73 percent increase.

Meanwhile, the PBA is also planning to bring its act to Dubai and Australia after a visit to Guam, where Red Bull and Alaska will kick off the 2006-2007 PBA season on Sept. 22.

Though the formal opening of the Philippine Cup is scheduled on Oct. 1, the Bulls-Aces tiff will be considered as a regular match in the all-Filipino tournament.

Lions-Knights 'must-see' tiff

IF TICKET SALES WOULD BE THE BASIS, THE ENcounter between defending champion Letran and San Beda College is indeed a "must-see" ballgame. While students, alumni and avid supporters of both schools have to wait until tomorrow after the games were called off yesterday, the Management Committee of the National Collegiate Athletic Association still expecting a big crowd at the Ninoy Aquino Stadium. "Their rivalry is actually the oldest in the country as far as team sports competition is concerned," said NCAA Mancom chair Bernie Atienza of host school College of St. Benilde. The Knights and the Red Lions collide tomorrow at 4 p.m. with both teams hoping to end their first round campaigns in the 82nd NCAA men's basketball wars on a positive note. The only time the Knights and the Red Lions disputed the NCAA title was in 1950, when Letran won.

RACING TIPS

BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1—(Qrt/Tri)—Mr. Cutter (4), T-Mac (6), Magley (7), High Fashion/Marpangi Moon (2)
Race 2—(Qrt/Tri)—Kalshnikov (5), Play It Again (4), Blue Iris (1), Romblon Rock (6)
Race 3—(Qrt/Tri)—Tinder (3), Marque (1), Vivere (5), Aliwalas (1)
Race 4—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—From This Moment (4), Karma (9), Speed Bullet (8), Sunline (3), Red Diamond (10)
Race 5—(Qrt/Tri)—Aryaam/Aunt Margaret (5), Ballet Danseuse (3), RenzieStays (6), Don't Tell Ella (1)
Race 6—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Jay Nicole (6), Smooth Strike (1), Gigi's Gold (2), Terry Toon (7), Portfolio Dividend/Ravishing Raffy (8)
Race 7—(penta/Qrt/Tri)—Long Ditter (2), Sa Wakas (7), Well Noted (1), Daddy's Girl (4), War Hero (5)
Race 8—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Jet Sutter (5), Lord Boni (1), triple Threat (6), Kai Akino/Prince Richard (3), Condoleeza (2), Black Pearl (9)

DCP lines up 6 big dartfests

THE DARTS COUNCIL OF THE PHILIPPINES (DCP) has lined up six major tournaments to select a national team to represent the country in the Asia-Pacific Cup on Sept. 19 to 24. "We are now in the process of selecting the cream of the crop from our darters who will carry the Philippine flag in major international tournaments," said lawyer Andrew L. Arrieta, DCP president. The DCP Darts Tour 2006 starts with the Philmasters Championship on July 28-30 in Baguio City. This will be followed by the National Open Singles Championship in Cagayan de Oro City starting Aug. 25. The Philippine International Darts Open is set Oct. 27-29 at SBMA in Olongapo City. Also on tap are the Philippine Cup Team Championship on Nov. 30 to Dec. 2 at the Pearl Plaza in Parañaque City, the one-day Battle of Champions, on Dec. 3 also at Pearl Plaza Mall and the Metro Manila Darts League 2006.

SPORTSWATCH

Gaston new NBCC president

FORMER PBA STAR FRITZ GASTON WAS ELECTED CHAIR OF THE NATIONAL Basketball Coaches Commission, succeeding Boysie Zamar during the election of officers at the Manila Hotel recently. Gaston once played for UTex and Crispa. Also elected were Loreto Tolentino, Arturo Cristobal and Domeng Unson, vice chairs; Bong Go, executive director; Horacio Lim, assistant executive director; Sunny Co, treasurer; Alex Wang, executive adviser; Boy Cahanding Jr., officio president; and Orly Bauzon, Zamar, Johny Tam, Raymond Celis, Paul Advincula, Ronnie Cahanding and Shellalyn Gabagat, board of directors. Basketball Association of the Philippines president Joey Lina inducted the officers assisted by BAP EVP Christian Tan.

LPC cockfest attracts 200 entries

MORE THAN 200 COCKERS OF LAS PIÑAS, PARAÑAQUE, PASAY, MUNTINLUPA and Cavite collide today in Las Piñas Coliseum's Fastest Win One-Cock Ulutan beginning at 7 a.m. Fights will be held until midnight. Coliseum manager Alex Tobias, and Yoyoy Dahonog, event hosts, said the total guaranteed prize is P230,000 for an entry fee of P1,100. The breakdown of prizes: fastest win champion, P70,000; second, P50,000; third, P30,000; fourth to eight, P10,000; 9th and 10th placers, P15,000. Call 873-1040 and 874-3910.

SJC Rambulan gets going today

ALL ROADS LEAD TO THE SAN JUAN COLISEUM TODAY AS THE PENULTIMATE round of P3.5M Rambulan 5-cock derby gets going at 5 p.m. with more than 80 matches lined up. Sponsor is Sagupaan Complexor 3000. Participants with 1 and 1.5 points will see action, according to promoter Ronnie Lacsina. A total prize of P700,000 will be distributed to the winners, broken down as follows: day champion, P400,000; any three points, P200,000 and champion handler, P100,000. This six-day derby holds it championship round on Saturday with over 120 fights. Contact 0918-9001411 (Lacsina) for details.

Additional prizes in Pasay cockfest

THE TOTAL GUARANTEED PRIZE IN PASAY CITY COCKPIT'S 20TH ANNIVERsary 5-cock derby (July 24, 26 and 28) exceeded the P2 million mark due to the unexpected influx of entries. "Participants with 1 and 1.5 points can still win valuable prizes due to the added prizes for any four points. Likewise, they can also aim for the three points combo of P100,000," said pit manager Eric dela Rosa. The championship round of the derby backed by Sagupaan Complexor 3000 starts at 2 p.m. tomorrow with over 100 fights on tap. Those seeing action tomorrow must submit entries today, from 2-9 p.m. Call 843-1890, 843-1746 and 816-6750.

Olympian Pons Saldaña dies

PONCIANO "PONS" SALDAÑA, MEMBER OF THE 1954 NATIONAL TEAM TO THE Rio de Janeiro Brazil World Championship that landed 3rd place, died on July 21 following a heart attack. He played for the San Beda Red Lions and PAL in the defunct MICAA. Saldaña also saw action in the 1952 Helsinki Olympics and 1954 Asian Games in Manila. His body was brought to Arlington and cremated at Loyola. His ashes were flown to Iloilo, where he was based.

DIAMOND JUBILARIANS: Surviving members of the 1946 UAAP champion UST Glowing Goldies. Seated (from left): Antonio Martinez, Dr. Jose Genato Jr., Lt. Col. Julian Malonso (ret.) and Ramoncito Campos. Standing (from left): Tito Tagle, Zenaida V. Fernandez (Francisco Vestil's daughter), Edwina N. Leung (Francisco Nepomuceno Sr.'s daughter) and Antonio Fajardo (Gabriel Fajardo's son and Felicisimo Fajardo's nephew).

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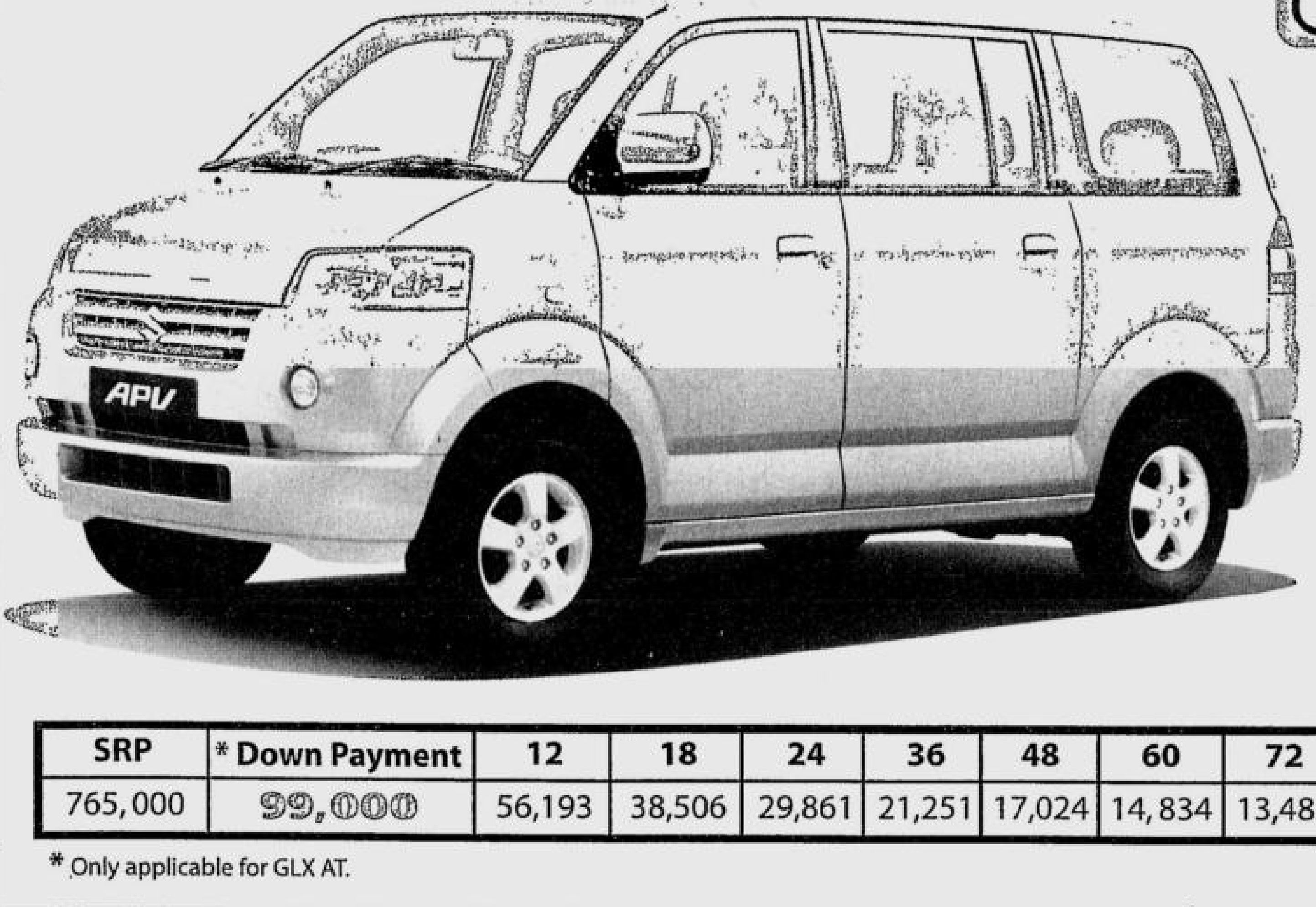

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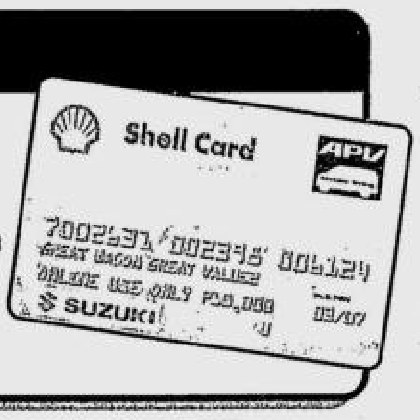

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SPORTS

US names 15-man roster

HINRICH REUTERS

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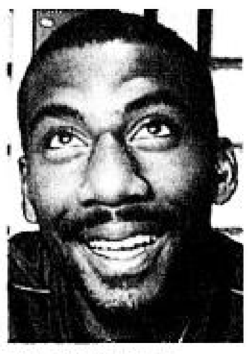
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WADE REUTERS

LAS VEGAS, NEVADA—LeBron James joined fellow class of 2003 NBA draft members Dwyane Wade, Chris Bosh and Kirk Hinrich in making the cut as the USA trimmed its roster to 15 for the World Basketball Championships.

They all, as expected, survived the first round of cuts as the American team wrapped up a six-day training camp here on Tuesday.

After letting Seattle SuperSonics guard Luke Ridnour and Charlotte Bobcats forward Adam Morrison go on Tuesday, American coach Mike Krzyzewski still has three more cuts to make before the Worlds which begin Aug. 19 in Japan.

"I spoke to them (Ridnour and Morrison) and they were understanding and very appreciative," said Krzyzewski.

This will be one of the youngest teams full of NBA stars the US has sent to the Worlds. Krzyzewski had to retool the roster because a number of players either declined to play for the national team or pulled out with injuries.

That absent list includes guard Kobe Bryant of the Los Angeles Lakers (knee injury), Paul Pierce of Boston (elbow) and rookie guard JJ Redick of Orlando (back).

In addition, Lakers forward Lamar Odom withdrew due to the death of his infant son and Detroit Pistons All-Star guard Chauncey Billups pulled out to spend more time with his newborn daughter.

As recently as Monday, Phoenix Suns forward Shawn Marion pulled out because of a left knee injury.

"If they (injuries and withdrawals) hadn't have happened, it certainly would have been tough to get down to 15 or 16 players, but these things take care of themselves," Krzyzewski said.

Hinrich, 25, is no lock to survive that cut, but his 2003 draft classmates almost certainly are.

James, the 21-year-old superstar swingman of the Cleveland Cavaliers, and Wade, the electric 24-year-old All-Star guard of the NBA champion Miami Heat, are the best of the bunch and among the 10 players chosen that are 25 or younger.

Other youngsters include Bosh (22), the All-Star forward of the Toronto Raptors, and Denver forward Carmelo Anthony (22); guards Gilbert Arenas of Washington (24) and Chris Paul of New Orleans (21); swingman Joe Johnson of Atlanta (25); forward-center Dwight Howard of Orlando (20); and center Amare Stoudemire of Phoenix (23).

"We do have a lot of young players," Krzyzewski said. "You could put seven or eight of those guys on a team and every one of them would be under 25 and they're good."

The elder statesmen include Los Angeles Clippers forward Elton Brand, Washington forward Antawn Jamison, Sacramento center Brad Miller and defensive-minded forwards Shane Battier of Houston and Bruce Bowen of San Antonio.

Team USA has not won an international event since the 2000 Olympics. *AFP*

9 RP bets whip rivals in IPT tilt

From page A21

ish second in Group 46. Manalo's loss came at the hands of group topnotcher Quinten Hann (4-8).

Alcano, installed as a top five pick by bookmakers here, first ripped Aussie John Wims (8-3) before getting past American George San Souci (8-2), Valle (8-6) and Orcollo (8-7). Alcano, the 2002 AZ Billiards Rookie of the Year, suffered his only loss to ex-US Open 9-ball king Corey Deuel, 6-8.

Other noted players advancing were former world 9-ball champions Mika Immonen of Finland, Nick Varner, Earl Strickland and Johnny Archer of the USA, Ralf Souquet and Thorsten Hohmann of Germany.

The 60 players who advanced to the third round were bracketed into 12 groups of five players each with the top three in each group qualifying for the next round.

Reyes wound up in Group 62 with Strickland, Bustamante in Group 63, Orcollo in Group 64 with Archers, Lining in Group 65 with Immomen, Luat in Group 67, Sambajon and Pagulayan in Group 69 and Manalo and Alcano in Group 70.

The survivors of the third round are assured of $17,000 (P880,000). *Marlon Bernardino, contributor*

BANAYAG: Seeded defending champion

Davao hopes to find 3rd marathon queen

DAVAO CITY—THE COUNTRY'S LAST two Milo Marathon queens came from Davao City.

Small wonder the southern paradise is aiming to crown a third one.

Estela Mamac-Diaz topped the Davao City leg in 2004 and Jhoan Banayag followed suit last year. They both went on to bag the women's titles in the Milo Marathon Finals in Metro Manila.

Being the defending champion, Banayag is already seeded to this year's grand finals on Dec. 10. Diaz, on the other hand, is already a qualifier having ruled the Kidapawan City leg of the race on Jan. 29.

Likewise, perennial contender and former Davao City leg winner Monaliza Ambasa already ran in the Gen. Santos City leg on July 2 and won.

This leaves a wide open race for other Dabawenyas to step up and hog the limelight.

Among the runners to watch on Sunday when the 12th elimination leg of the year kicks off at the Rizal Park in Davao City are the promising Cherry Ann Javellana and the veteran Hazel Madamba of Butuan City.

In the men's side, defending champion Angelito Sibayan is expected to retain his crown. He is expected to get tough challenge from Rey Villarma of University of Mindanao.

According to local race organizer Vic Sai, a record field of 9,000 runners will participate in the Davao leg of the country's biggest and longest-running foot race held in partnership with Cebu Pacific, Bayview Park Hotel-Manila, Adidas, Department of Tourism and Powerbar. It is also supported here by the Fil-Chinese Firefighters Foundation, Inc., Davao Traffic Management Group, Patafa-XI and the Davao City Sports Council.

The race will start at Rizal Park at exactly 6 a.m.

'Dynamite' explodes, nails RP lightweight title

DAPITAN CITY—DEXTER "DINAMITA" DELADA won the Philippine lightweight title with a scary third-round technical knockout win over Christopher Saluday in the main event of the Double Trouble card here Tuesday night.

After absorbing a series of big lefts, Saluday turned his back midway in the third as a sign of surrender following the heavy bombardments from Delada.

Saluday, however, started strong and cut Delada early with a shot over the right eye, before the duo waged a breath-taking exchange of punches.

Saluday was downed by a big left in the second round, and saw himself deducted twice in the same round following accidental head-butts.

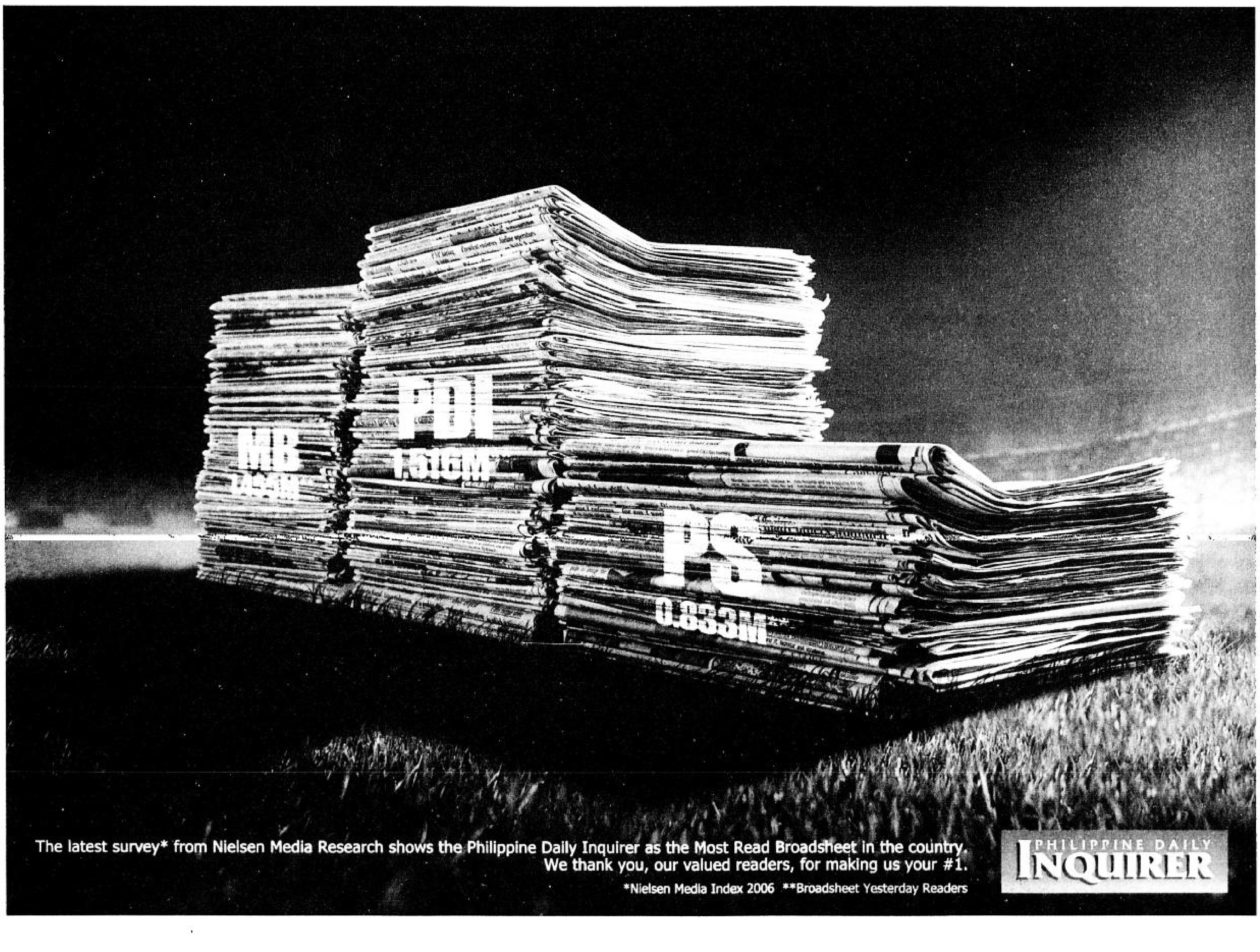
In the co-mainer, Wyndel Janiola took the PBF light-flyweight title with a majority decision over Davao's Philip Parcon over 10 rounds.

Janiola was floored in the penultimate round, but had piled up enough points to barely edge out the gutsy Parcon.

In the undercards, Jonathan Ba-at prevailed on a fifth-round technical decision over Cebu's Pingping Tepura after a cut on Ba-at from an accidental clash of heads that prompted the ring physician to order a stoppage.

Cebu's Apol Suico also prevailed on a ninth-round knockout over a spirited Isidro Balabat, while Gedion Amba was impressive in a second-round technical knockout win over Jing Supremo after a hellish exchange of leather.

Joe Galamiton also barely prevailed over Jonathan Candari on a close unanimous decision.
Salven Lagumbay, contributor



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TAKE FIVE
RUDY ESPERAS

What makes Jessica Soho happy?

Packed newscasts, cutting-edge docus, top ratings for GMA 7. Also huge bags, shopping, cooking (baked mac and Chinese ham), and personally stuffing the food bags of reporters and crew men she's dispatching everywhere with everything, from dried fish and shrimp paste to *munggo* and *korniks*. *See page A2-2.*

Urian lifetime achievement award goes to Eddie Garcia

EDDIE GARCIA

ACTOR-DIRECTOR EDDIE V. Garcia will receive the Natatanging Gawad for lifetime achievement in cinema during the 29th Gawad Urian on Aug. 3.

Given out by the Manunuri ng Pelikulang Pilipino, the Gawad Urian is considered the most credible award for excellence in Filipino filmmaking.

Garcia, 85, is being cited for multiple achievements as actor, director and all-around icon in the film industry. The Manunuri is also citing him for his selfless support of aspiring filmmakers by playing roles in indie movies for nearly no pay.

In 1999, Garcia appeared in Raymond Red's "Anino," which won the grand prize in the short film category of the Cannes Film Festival.

Garcia also appeared in Filipino-American Gene Cajayon's "Debut," which won the Best

URIAN/ A2-4

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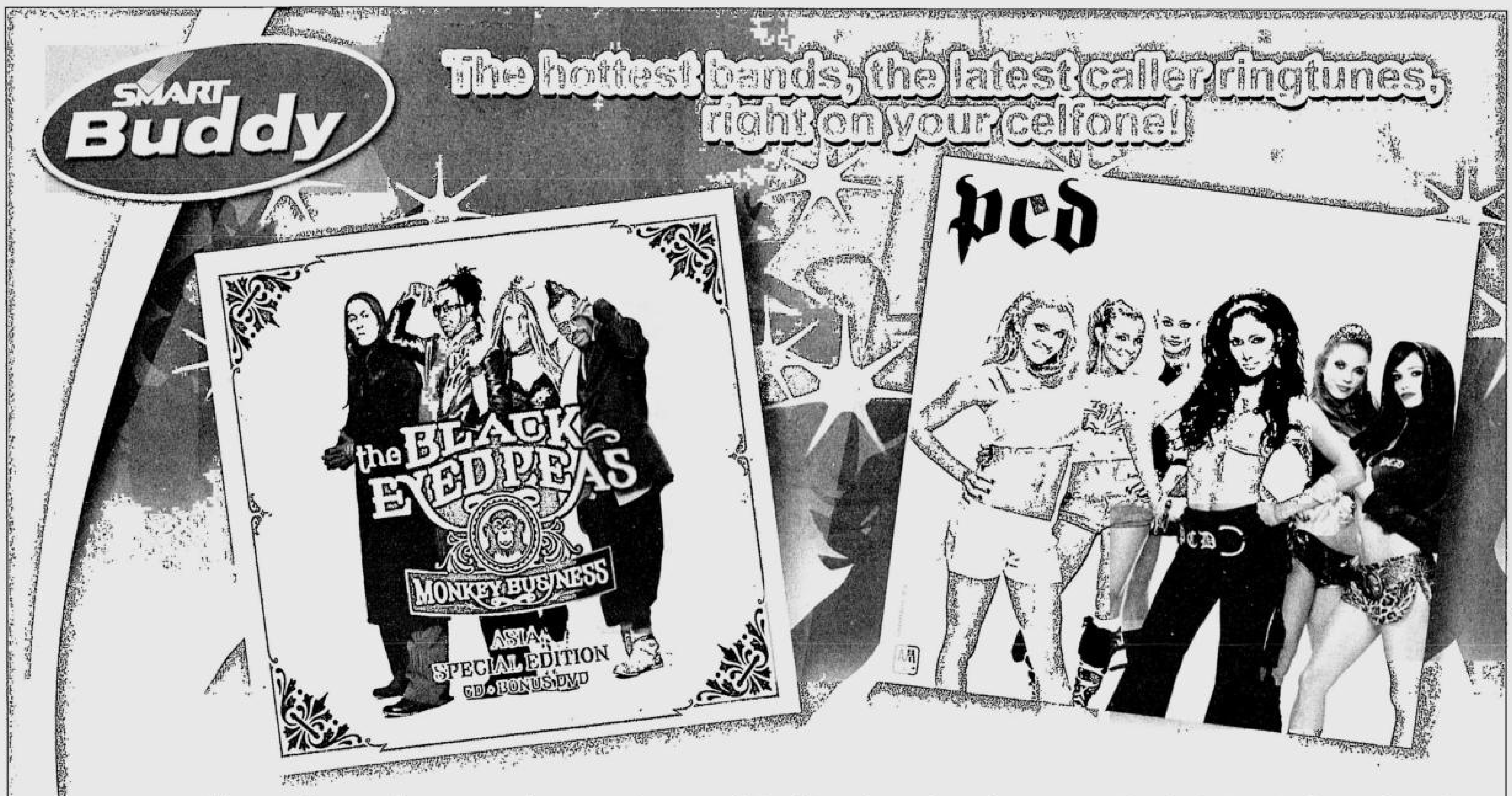

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Jessica Soho: On the record

By the INQUIRER Entertainment Staff

A PEEK INTO THE PURSE OF award-winning broadcast journalist Jessica Soho yields curious discoveries.

She's not lugging around the 1999 Peabody trophy (the Pulitzer of broadcasting) or the 1993 TOYM (The Outstanding Young Men) medal—just two of her numerous achievements; instead we find, as she fishes them out, Nokia 9500 and 9300 cell phones and her passport, plus stacks upon stacks of research material.

That's because as reporter, TV host (of the Saturday night show, "Kapuso Mo, Jessica Soho") and vice president of GMA 7 News and Public Affairs, Jessica's work is never done.

She explains that everyday, anywhere she may be, she receives ratings reports and news story lists on her fax-ready mobile phones.

The passport, she points out, is always on hand just in case she's suddenly dispatched abroad—anywhere from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe.

As for the research material ...

Let's just say she has come prepared for this INQUIRER interview—which is, of course, intruding into her job of overseeing "24 Oras," "Saksi" and "Flash Report," but we can't keep it short (it takes over two hours).

In the middle of the exchange, she receives the story lineup for that evening's prime time news program.

She takes her job seriously, that's clear. It's no joke being in charge of the 880-strong News and Public Affairs department.

"That's 300 plus for News alone," she gasps.

She admits that, as boss, she tends to be too hands-on, "bordering on being OC."

Believe it or not, she personally did the grocery shopping for the network's Mount Everest team.

"I made sure they had *hibe* and *bagoong* as *baon* to Nepal," Jessica recounts, chuckling.

How hectic is your life, exactly?

I'm like a child star, deprived of childhood.

Even though you no longer host the daily morning show?

Yes, it's crazy, because I'm now running the newsroom day-to-day.

You're in the studio when "24 Oras" goes on air?

Yes. I make it a point to be in the office 3 p.m. onwards, monitoring the news minute per minute. A big story may break in the middle of a newscast. Everything is fluid and, because of the limited running time, some stories are dropped from the lineup. Often, we have to make decisions on the spot.

For example?

The school shooting in Beslan, in the former USSR (2004). We scrapped our original lineup.

How do you choose stories to be aired?

Of course, the news item should be of national interest. Plane crashes and terrorist bombings are no-brainers. But it gets tricky when there are no big stories that stand out. That's when we consider the intricacies of the medium—we make sure that a story comes out with a good video.

What if it's a good story, but there's no accompanying video?

Sometimes we still air it, if it's really big.

What time does your day start?

Around 10 or 11 a.m., I usually start making calls. If I'm lucky, I find time to go on the treadmill. But if I have a shoot for "Kapuso," I'm up at 9 a.m.

How many times a week do you shoot for "Kapuso"?

Sometimes twice ... But if I'm going abroad, more than twice.

When you're abroad, who runs the newsroom?

I do, by remote control. I call the news desk to find out what's happening and to tell them which stories to pursue. They call me if problems arise.

Do you bring your many gadgets abroad?

My cell phones have built-in fax. I get the lineup, and ratings, daily.

So you need to carry a big bag all the time!

My bag is my house ... and I have two of these!

What are your other duties in the newsroom?

Naku, I do big and small things for reporters. When we sent a team to Mount Everest, I did the groceries for them. I asked what they wanted—chocolates, instant noodles, junk food? I even bought monggo, *bagoong* (shrimp paste), *tuyo* (dried fish) and *hibe* (dried shrimp). (Mountain climber) Romy Garduce was astonished that we got the *bagoong* through customs.

These little touches are important when you're sending people off to battle, so to speak. That's also part of my job, to look after their welfare. Imagine, I was sending five people to trek in snow for 11 days!

You're at once a mentor and tormentor.

I terrorize them, yes. It's not easy. I've come to terms with the fact that I'm the *kontrabida* in their lives. But there are times when I feel I need to show my appreciation. For example, it's a tradition at the office that, on Noche Buena, I buy them Majestic ham and cook macaroni salad.

How much time do you have for yourself?

Very little.

What do you do to unwind?

I cook. It's good therapy. I go to the Lung Center [flea market] every Sunday and buy organic vegetables.

How much air time do you allot to police stories?

We don't do police stories that often. Sheila Coronel's group (Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism) conducted a study commissioned by the De La Salle University (2006), which showed that we have less crime stories compared to [ABS-CBN's] "TV Patrol." Usually, we have two to three stories, and two of them would be about accidents.

Your tagline is: "*Ang imporante, buhay ng tao* (What's important is people's lives)."

Our reports always work within the context of public safety. We acquired a computer software that can situate crime hotspots in the city. We contextualize [the information]. Why do robberies occur in that place? Is it because there's a busted streetlamp? But really, we have less crime stories now.

Is this a network policy?

It's not really ... in black and white, but it's a conscious effort.

How many entertainment stories do you air nightly?

Three voiced-over show biz stories with short VTRs. "Chika Minute" comes out thrice on "24 Oras."

How do you handle entertainment news, especially since the network also has its own stable of stars?

Although we help promote some of our entertainment programs, we still have to report news that involves our contract artists. Like, we reported on Richard Gomez's problems with the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR). Same with Ethel Booba and Alex Crisano [who had a violent fight] in Boracay—it so happened that our reporter, Lala Roque, was billeted in the same hotel as Ethel and Alex.

What about movies produced by GMA Films?

That's also about our stars, but we instruct reporters to look for a news angle, and not make it an outright promo. We deal with advertisers the same way. One company threatened to pull out its ads because we did a report on its environmental violations. But the stand of Mr. Gozon (lawyer Felipe Gozon, GMA 7 president) is that we cannot suppress news. I myself can be hardheaded in this aspect because I'm from the old school of journalism.

What was your favorite beat as a reporter?

Defense, where I earned my stripes. It was also perfect timing because that was the season of coups, the transition years after Edsa I.

Who was your mentor?

Louie Beltran was my teacher in UP Diliman. I took up Journalism—print, not broadcast. So when I started working for GMA 7, I had to learn everything from scratch. I couldn't write long sentences. I couldn't do "atmosphere" articles. I threw out the window everything I had learned in school.

What do you watch on TV, presuming you still have the time?

Lately, Koreanovelas. I'm amazed by the Koreans; they're fantastic storytellers, so into details. We seem to have lost that touch. Their love scenes are so heartfelt, even if the lead stars are not shown kissing or embracing. I went to Korea once for a story and asked TV directors what made their soap operas so effective. I suppose it's because they went back to old storytelling values. They told me these values never go out of style.

Do you dream about your job?

Hay naku, bangungot (nightmare)! At first, it was tough because I didn't like managing people—especially news people. I had sleepless nights when it dawned on me that I'd be supervising all of them—including Mike Enriquez!

Do you feel like a celebrity?

Television is a peculiar medium. We're supposed to be journalists, but we come out on the same screen as Sharon Cuneta and Ethel Booba. Whether we like it or not, we've evolved into celebrities.

Raymond Bagatsing to tour US as Rizal

EDWIN B-CASMAS

RAYMOND BAGATSING

RAYMOND BAGATSING WILL star in a stage play about Jose Rizal, written by a Polish-American author. The play, "Blue Moon," will tour the United States starting October. Way to go! Full story tomorrow in INQUIRER Entertainment.

RUSHES

RODEL ROTONI

JANICE DE BELEN

Oh, what a kiss!

WHO is Janice de Belen trying to reach with this serious smooch? Find out tomorrow in Stars Living.

RUDY ESPERAS

REGINE VELASQUEZ and Robin Padilla

That's bonding

WE WITNESSED the "bonding" day for "Till I Met You" lead stars Regine Velasquez and Robin Padilla. It was drizzling up in the Tagaytay location, but the atmosphere was sizzling hot! Story and more pictures tomorrow, in Stars Living.

Greatest Brit hero

LONDON—Actor Sean Connery, best known for playing secret agent James Bond, has been voted the greatest British hero in a poll released Tuesday. *AFP*

New gig

LOS ANGELES—Britney Spears' hubby has a new gig.

Kevin Federline, 28, will close the Teen Choice Awards, performing his single "Lose Control" for the first time on network television. The show airs Aug. 20 on Fox. *AP*

Stay away...

LOS ANGELES—A Los Angeles judge has issued a restraining order against a woman who suddenly confronted Irish actor Colin Farrell during a taping of "The Tonight Show with Jay Leno," court officials said Monday.

Dessarae Bradford, 31 years, who climbed on stage during Thursday's taping and appeared to hand the actor some papers, stopping the television show, must remain at least 50 yards (meters) away from the actor until a new hearing on Aug. 16, the court ruled. *AFP*

... or my mom will shoot. Colin Farrell with mom Rita at the "Miami Vice" premiere.

West End debut

LONDON—Hollywood star Patrick Swayze will make his debut in London's West End on Thursday (Friday in Manila) after a chest infection forced him to postpone his opening night, a theater spokesman said Monday.

Swayze, 53, will play gambler Nathan Detroit in "Guys and Dolls" at the Piccadilly Theatre. *AFP*

Another Cruise win

GENEVA—Action hero film star Tom Cruise on Monday won an off-screen combat—against a cyber-pirate who was using his name for advertising.

The UN intellectual property agency WIPO said an Internet dispute body it runs had ruled for Cruise. The pirate, identified only as Network Operations Center/Alberta Hot Rods, was ordered to hand over the Internet domain name tomcruise.com to the actor. *Reuters*

Sensitive Richie

NEW YORK—Lionel Richie, father of size-zero Nicole Richie, says he's hurt by media chatter about his daughter's weight loss.

"I'll be honest with you, it hurts me more than it hurts her," the 57-year-old R&B singer tells "Access Hollywood" in an interview. "I must tell you, I'm the basket case." *AP*

Goodbye, Cowell

NEW YORK—David Hasselhoff saw his star rise again as a judge on NBC television's "America's Got Talent," produced by pal Simon Cowell. Still, he says he might not return for another season.

"I don't know," Hasselhoff tells Newsweek magazine in its July 31 issue. "This is not my cup of tea. I signed on for one season, and Simon Cowell conned me into it: 'Here's a lot of money,' and it's like "The Gong Show."" *AP*

FEEDBACK

Thanks for 9/11 feature

From Amelia J. Pebly-Luke (psu_330@yahoo.com):

Dear Mr. Nepales,

I read your article entitled, "I actually saw Jesus coming toward me" via SpiritDaily.com. Very well written! I live less than 45 minutes away (I'm in New Jersey) from the Twin Towers and have several friends who either witnessed people jumping from the building (Mike's hair turned white within four days, and he's only 25) or lost parents and spouses (Samie went through two years of counseling).

I am going to forward your article to my family and ask them to pray for those two guys you wrote about—and definitely, I myself will pray for them and their rescuers!

Thank you again for writing such a great article! God bless you!

From Maria Luisa Rodriguez-Lee (leeml@morris.umn.edu), Ph. D., Professor Emeritus of Spanish, Morris, MN:

Dear Mr. Nepales,

Thank you very much for writing the article, "I actually saw Jesus coming toward me," recounting the 9/11 heroic rescue and survival stories of Will Jimeno and John McLoughlin.

I am a Catholic, and I thank you very much for quoting their exact words—testifying to the fact that they prayed "The Lord's Prayer and the "Hail Mary" over and over until the rescue workers found them.

Even though the secular film only mentions this fact once and the secular media usually—99.9 percent of the time—either omits this or grudgingly mentions it, you had the courage and honesty to print the truth. You are a rare columnist in this secular world.

Thank you, and may God bless you.

From Elizabeth Desouze (elkdesouza@hotmail.com), Deltona, Fl. USA:

Dear Mr. Nepales,

Your article was enlightening. Now I'm looking forward to seeing the movie, especially since faith in Jesus Christ will be emphasized via the media in this country, something that is so much needed. Most of the time, the media work against believers and ridicules them overtly or subtly—which is all right, for we too are meant to carry our cross.

It just feels good to be validated. And most of all, God will be pleased.

Solo Dei gloria!

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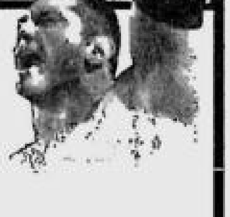

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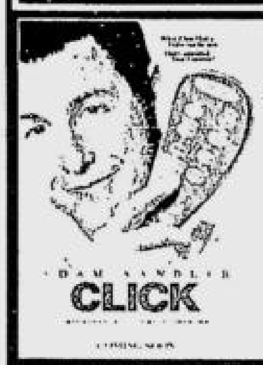

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3 JUST MY LUCK
4 WILD ORCHID 2
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7 LADY IN THE WATER
8 WHITE LADY
9 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN 2
10 SUPERMAN RETURNS

ERMITA 536-7809 to 12

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2 WHITE LADY
3 JUST MY LUCK
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Urian lifetime achievement ...

From page A2-1

Dramatic Feature award in the San Diego International Film Festival in 2000; and in Rica Arevalo's "ICU Bed # 7," which won for Best Director in the first Cinemalaya Film Festival last year.

As an actor, Garcia has played the full gamut of roles available in feature cinema, from villain to leading man. He has starred in nearly all genres—from his 1949 debut in the costume "moro-moro" drama, "Siete Infantes de Lara," by Manuel Conde, to the Chinese-Filipino patriarch in 2002's multi-cultural epic, "Mano Po."

Initially making his mark as a "contravida," the suave, mustachioed and Hispanic-looking Garcia has since played real-life personalities such as General Alfredo Lim and General Alfredo Karingal, avenging judge ("Judge Valderama" movies), and even comical roles (the horny "Manoy").

Garcia is the most-awarded actor in Philippine cinema. Famas, the oldest awards institution in the country, made him its first Hall of Fame awardee in 1974 for winning the Best Supporting Actor six times.

He is also in the Famas Hall of Fame for winning Best Actor and Best Director five times each.

To date, Garcia has appeared in more than 250 feature movies. The Gawad Urian named Garcia Best Actor in 2000 for the prison drama, "Deathrow."

Garcia is also one of the most successful film directors in Philippine history. In the 1980s, he directed the biggest movies of Sharon Cuneta and Vilma Santos. His best films are generally considered to be "Atsay" (1978), starring Nora Aunor, and "Imortal" (1989), starring Santos.

The 29th Gawad Urian will be held at the Henry Lee Irwin Theater of the Ateneo de Manila University. Produced by APT Productions, the colorful ceremonies will be broadcast on Channel 9 on Aug. 5.

SHANG CINEPLEX

1 JUST MY LUCK
MTRCB GP
12:20, 2:45, 5:10, 7:35, 10:00

2 THE BREAK-UP
MTRCB R-13
12:00, 2:30, 5:00, 7:30, 10:00

3 SUKOB
MTRCB PG-13
12:20, 2:40, 5:00, 7:20, 9:40

4 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN 2
MTRCB GP
12:30, 3:40, 6:50, 10:10

PREMIERE THEATRE
NACHO LIBRE
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MTRCB PG-13

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SUKOB PG13	LADY IN THE WATER PG13	BREAK-UP R13

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PG13

CINEMA 2 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN 2
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GP

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PG13/R13

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10:50, 1:05, 3:20, 5:35, 7:50, 10:05
GP

CINEMA 5 BREAK UP
11:30, 1:45, 4:00, 6:15, 8:30, 10:40
R13

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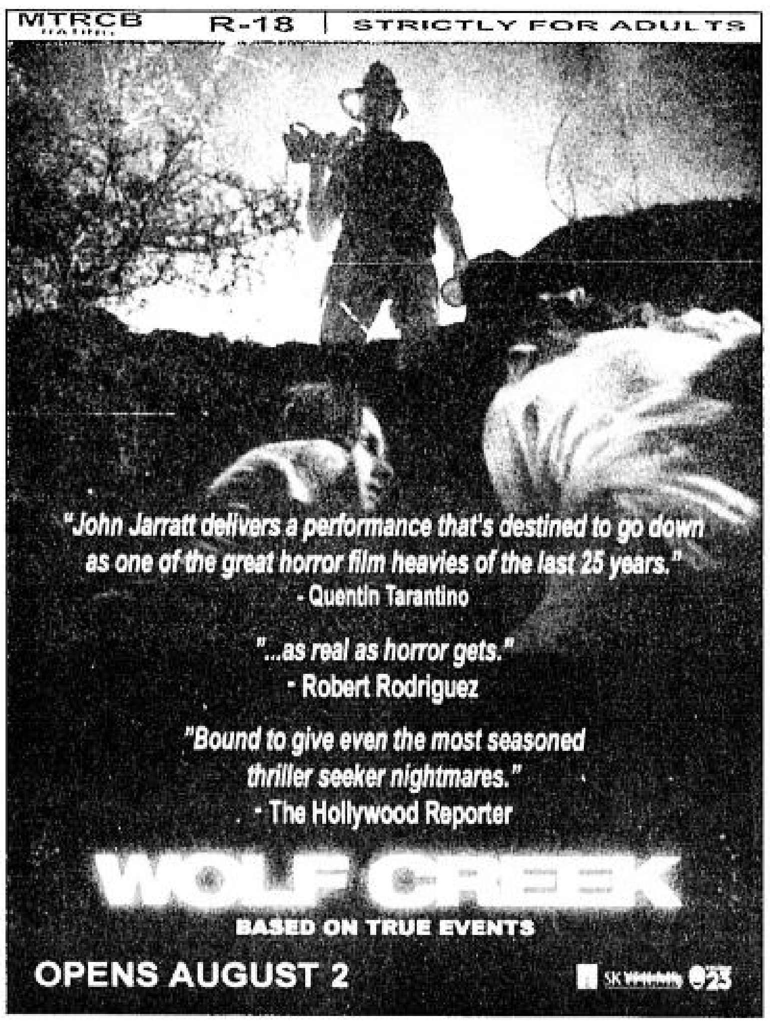

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PG-13

2 JUST MY LUCK
1:20, 3:45, 6:10, 8:35, 11:00
G

3 THE BREAK-UP
1:05, 3:35, 6:05, 8:35, 11:00
R-13

4 NACHO LIBRE
1:40, 4:00, 6:20
PG-13

PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN
8:35, 11:30
G

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G4 GLORIETTA 4	1 JUST MY LUCK	2 THE BREAK-UP	3 THX PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN 1:00, 4:10, 7:20, 10:30 GUARANTEED SEATS	
	4 THE PRODUCERS	5 NACHO LIBRE	6 SUKOB	7 LADY IN THE WATER
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1 SUKOB	2 THE BREAK-UP		
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX JUST MY LUCK 12:30, 2:40, 4:50, 7:00, 9:10, 11:20 GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX THE BREAK-UP 12:30, 2:40, 4:50, 7:00, 9:10, 11:20 GUARANTEED SEATS		
	3 THE PRODUCERS 12:30, 3:15, 6:00, 8:45, 11:30 GUARANTEED SEATS	4 LADY IN THE WATER 1:50, 4:15, 6:40, 9:05, 11:30 GUARANTEED SEATS	5 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN 1:45, 4:45, 7:45, 10:45 GUARANTEED SEATS	
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX THE BREAK-UP	2 SUKOB		
	3 JUST MY LUCK	4 LADY IN THE WATER	5 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN: DEAD MAN'S CHEST	
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN: DEAD MAN'S CHEST	2 SUKOB	3 UNITED 93	4 AMERICAN HAUNTING
M2 MARKET! MARKET!	1 SUKOB	2 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN: DEAD MAN'S CHEST		
	3 WHITE LADY	4 JUST MY LUCK	5 THE BREAK-UP	

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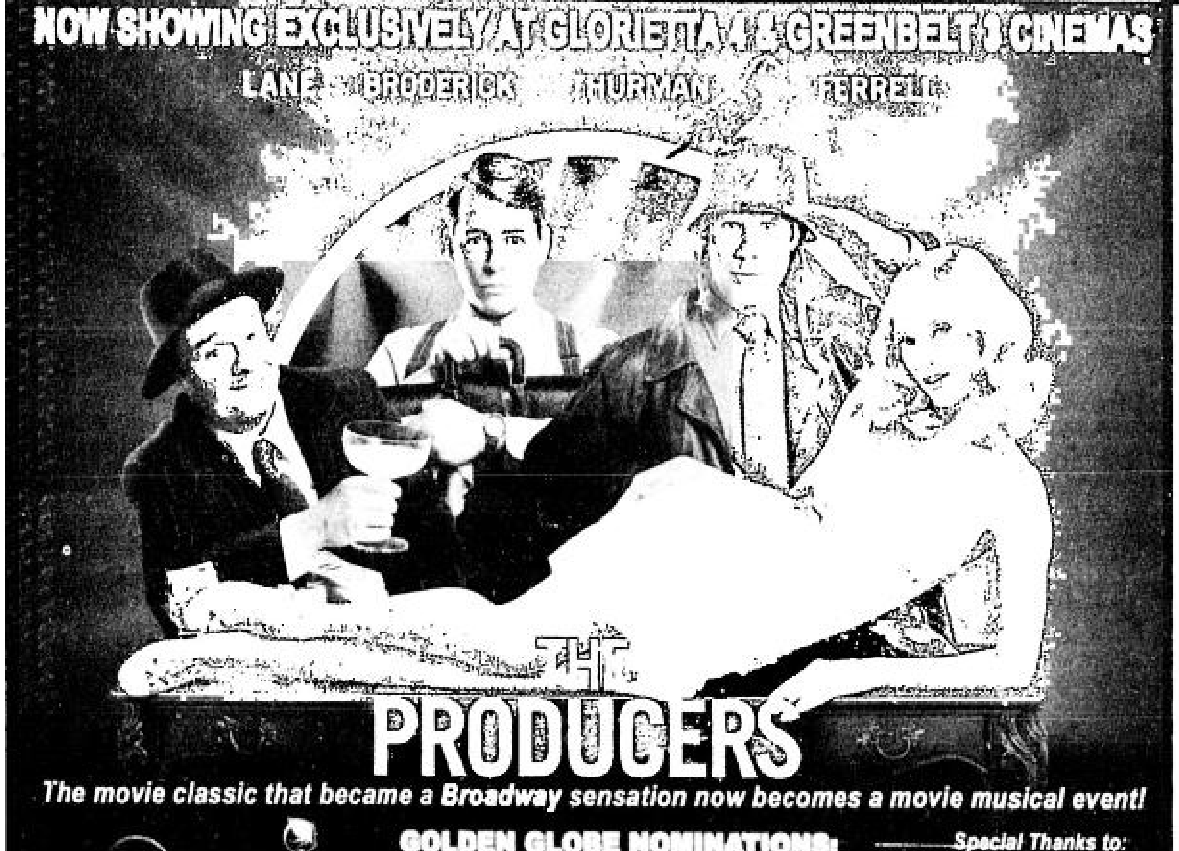

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Breaking down the walls

REVIEW

COMPOUND BARRIERS. Imagining what's on the other side

By Paul Daza
Contributor

"MELROSE PLACE" AS SEEN through the unflinching eyes of David Lynch and Mike de Leon. That's one way to describe "Compound," the impressive digital movie debut of filmmaker Will Fredo. The indie feature was exhibited out of competition at the just-concluded Cinemalaya 2006 at CCP.

Shot with a DV camera, "Compound" is the dynamic project of a new Filipino movie maverick. Working with a talented but mostly unknown cast, Fredo creates an unsettling portrait of people who have little in common apart from their address.

Arcilla leads the cast as Virgilio, owner of the compound where 90 percent of the movie takes place. With a wife who doesn't satisfy him sexually, a teen daughter who claims to have imaginary friends, and a business on the verge of collapse, Virgilio sniffs *shabu*.

Panic, paranoia

Arcilla successfully communicates Virgilio's pain, panic and paranoia, but the award-winning actor sometimes struggles with the English dialogue.

Janet Russ plays his vain wife Divina, who dreams of looking like Melanie Marquez. Russ succeeds in using Divina's shallow vanity to mask deeper emotions and motives.

Beauty queen Liza Diño is Romina, the drop-dead-gorgeous maid who has an affair with her *amo*. Perry Escaño plays Big Boy, a handsome houseboy/gardener.

Though a little too mestizo for their roles as house help, Diaño and Escaño are chiefly responsible for the sexiness in this thriller. Their acting is good, but they are hampered by their Tagalog lines.

The movie's standout performer is Jake Macapagal, who plays Jay, a bisexual yuppie torn between his ex-wife (Lily Chu) and a male lover (Marq Dollentes). Macapagal delivers all his lines, English and Filipino, with just the right accent for his character. His portrayal is quietly effective and devoid of cliches.

Challenge

Bringing all these characters to life within four isolating walls is director Will Fredo, who constantly challenges viewers to distinguish between what's real and what's imagined in this tale of a shabu user's descent into madness.

Fredo generates suspense by simply making viewers imagine what's on the other side of a locked door, and creates discomfort by showing a little girl tugging at her father's hairy arm.

The movie's technical aspects, especially the lighting, camerawork, sound and editing, are first-rate.

Also worthy of mention is the theme song of Bob Aves and Grace Nono, which underscores the characters' mournful inability to find love and happiness.

"Compound" starts out slowly, but builds steadily towards a mind-bending climax that's sprung on its audience like an unwound coil. Though a second viewing is recommended for those who want to fully understand the ending, one viewing will be enough to convince you that the cast and crew of "Compound," especially its hyphenate auteur Will Fredo, are worth keeping an eye on.

NATHAN Lane and Matthew Broderick reprise their roles as Max Bialystock and Leo Bloom in "The Producers." Uma Thurman costars.

'The Producers': When flop makers succeed

By Oliver M. Pulumbarit
Contributor

THE MEL BROOKS-CREATED Broadway smash "The Producers," now a quirky movie directed by Tony winner Susan Stroman, reutilizes stage and film actors Nathan Lane and Matthew Broderick, whose original performances as the title characters were pivotal to the musical's success.

Bombastic wit

The pair returns and reprises the roles for the new film incarnation (it was a 1968 film by Brooks), effortlessly helping create an absurd, over-the-top reality that allows for many catchy song-and-dance numbers.

There's bombastic wit in Brooks' timeless material, which peeks into the eccentric protocols of show biz. His characters here are mostly fleshed-out fops, especially weathered producer Max Bialystock (Lane). Reeling from a recent Broadway flop, Bialystock meets shy and obsessive accountant Leo Bloom (Broderick), who quickly quits his job to co-produce "the worst show" ever staged with him.

The musical, the new partners believe, will be so reviled that they'd run away with investors' money unnoticed, soon after its opening—or closing—night. The long, arduous process of casting the worst people for their chosen play, "Springtime for Hitler" takes up most of the movie's time, but it's occasionally hilarious and lively.

The film isn't without kinks, however, as gaps between production numbers are often too lengthy and sometimes feel uncomfortably bare, partly due to some stationary camera angles. Still, "The Producers" pulls out all the stops to make the numbers energetic and coherent. The hilarity is enhanced by Lane, to whom much of the film belongs. But his costars also leave their mark on it in varying degrees.

Broderick does well; it's especially funny when his nervous character remedies his panic attacks by touching a piece of his old blanket (just like Linus from Charles Schulz's "Peanuts" strip).

Equally amusing and rife with unpredictable mood shifts is the Nazi playwright played by Will Ferrell. Gary Beach and Roger Bart—who play the cross-dressing director and his flamboyant assistant, respectively—are the scene-stealers. Bart is virtually unrecognizable here; his role is far removed from his recurring character in "Desperate Housewives." And, unexpectedly, a singing, dancing Uma Thurman adds gloss and sensuality to the production as the token glamazon-actress wannabe, Ulla.

Occasionally silly

While its comedic substance gets rehashed and milked unceasingly, "The Producers" parodies portions of the entertainment industry well, giving a smart and occasionally silly take on its behind-the-scenes goings-on. It's a comprehensible and witty enough picture, however jaggedly imperfect, that centers on the common desire of entirely different people to entertain others, and perhaps, to get rich or famous while doing so. There's no business, after all, like show business, and "The Producers" understands and projects that cliché quite entertainingly.

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It has a sentimental storyline about a young girl named Blue (Nina Siemaszko) who is forced into prostitution by economic circumstances. She tries to live a double life in and out of the brothel and, in a vaguely Elizabethan twist, ends up providing paid pleasure to her dream man while she is in disguise.

The knowledge Blue gains while in dusguise allows her to evaluate her lover's sincerity later on. With the aid of a sympathetic brothel bodyguard Sully, Blue escapes the hold exerted on her by the madam, leaves town, and tries to establish herself as a high school student - in the same high school where her dream boy is the school quarterback! They end up courting one another chastely, although he remains unaware that he has already had sex with her. Meanwhile, the jilted madam wants Blue back, and will stop at nothing to get her.

MTRCB Rating: R-18

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3 SUKOB
4 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN - 2

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(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771
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2 SUKOB
3 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN - 2

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2 SUKOB
3 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN - 2
4 R. V. RUNAWAY VACATION

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2 WHITE LADY
3 SUKOB

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2 SUPERMAN RETURNS

Lianas Cinema
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2 SALAT
3 MAPUPULANG LABI
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2 BIGLANG LIKO
3 WHITE LADY
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2 SUKOB
3 TAKE THE LEAD
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Never on a diet

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

EVEN IF IT'S BEEN AGES SINCE **DIETHER Ocampo** and I last saw each other, we've never drifted apart. He's the kind of friend who makes a dent in your life. It was such a joy to touch base with him during his post-birthday dinner. I've never seen Diet more relaxed and at peace. Everything has fallen into place in his career and personal life.

"**Kristine (Hermosa)** and I have learned from our mistakes. We should not have rushed into marriage only to find out that it's void from the start. Hopefully, next year, we will do it right. And for sure *di na namin ililihim*!"

DIETHER OCAMPO and Kristine Hermosa

The beautiful couple will be seen in the premiere telecast of "Star Magic Presents" on July 29 (after "Wowowee").

Isn't he wary of the new faces in the biz? "Modesty aside, I worked hard to get to where I am right now. Most of the young actors these days become famous instantly by joining reality shows. It all came so easy for them so they don't really value their work. Instead of being insecure, I share with them what I know about being professional and all."

He also shares his blessings unselfishly via his K.I.D.S. Foundation. But the kid closest to his heart is his toddler son Dream. Proud Daddy Diet showed me a video of his *unico hijo* playing the drums. No need for drumbeating, though. Actors come and go but Diether is here to stay. Because when it comes to talent, he's never on a diet.

FYI (For Your Indulgence)

Troy Montero was spotted shopping in •Landmark with a chic lady who seems a bit older than him. She was clad in corporate attire. An eyewitness says Troy and the woman were quite sweet. Are they lovers or just shoppers? Does that mean that Aubrey is now MILES away from Troy's heart?

•I finally met **Manny Pacquiao** at the birthday bash of Tita **Cristy Fermin** where he gamely gave a mini concert. With his sheer popularity, it doesn't matter even if he just sings the "Abakada." Pacman will always be a knockout whatever he does. After his show, I got to chat with him. Manny was in high spirits while **John Estrada** was egging him on to drink some more. I was about to burst into a song, "*Para sa 'yo... ang tagay na 'to!*"

•My beloved colleagues **Benjie Felipe** and **Liza Endaya** (of The Buzz mag) were teasing **Sam Milby** that he should take more of the multivitamins he's endorsing, to improve his memory. They say that Sam usually forgets the names of press people he has met. But isn't Sam too cute not to forgive? Maybe what he can do as saving grace is to flash his killer smile and say, "I'm poor with names. Can I just call you Baby?"

• **Antoinette Taus** is back on the scene (after a one-and-a-half year hiatus in the US) but not in the arms of **Dingdong Dantes**. "I didn't come home to snatch him away from Karylle, though I got hurt because even when we were still on I heard talks that he was already dating **Karylle**. A week after we broke up, on *na sila*." What about the persistent rumor that they have a love child? "If we really had a kid, why should I hide it?" As she stages a comeback, Toni must contend with the fact that the name of her ex will always crop up and ring a bell (Ding! Dong!) through the grapevine.

•**Ritchie Paul Gutierrez** is out to prove that he can carve his own identity in the biz. "I'm proud of what my parents, sis and brothers have achieved but I don't want to be trapped in their shadow."

He is busy completing his first album, which he says won't be mediocre. "I don't want to come up with something just for the heck of it."

Catch this cool dude at SM Marilao and Dusit Hotel with Pops and Ogie (July 29) and SM Baguio (Aug. 16). If his *Kuya* Richard is Captain Barbell, Ritchie Paul happens to be the captain of his own ship.

'First Day High'

Kamikazee's "First Day High" song is climbing the charts and has become an anthem of sorts for today's youth. Its music video (directed by **Adrian Calumpang**) features icons like model **Kat Alano**, cager **Rich Alvarez**, **VJ Patty Laurel**, commercial actor **Charles Lejano** and movie actor **Boy 2 Quizon**. Rexona rates high in having stirred the youth's consciousness through the song. For more info, log on to www.firstdayhigh.com or text Rexona to 2955.

Magnificent Magno

Jazz chanteuse **Jacqui Magno**'s latest CD entitled "The Very Thought of You" will be launched Saturday, July 29, 6:30 p.m. at Merk's Bar Bistro, Level 3, Greenbelt 3 Makati. A launching concert will follow.

For feedback, e-mail wateringholeshangrila@yahoo.com

ROUNDUP

'Pirates' 3rd week

LOS ANGELES—"PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: DEAD MAN'S Chest" remains the top attraction for the third straight weekend.

The top 10 movies at US and Canadian theaters Friday to Sunday, according to Exhibitor Relations, official trackers:

1) "Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest," $321.89M, three weeks; 2) "Monster House," $22.21M, one week; 3) "Lady in the Water," $18.04M, one week; 4) "You, Me and Dupree," $45.29M, two weeks; 5) "Little Man," $40.63M, two weeks;

6) "Clerks II," $10.06M, one week; 7) "My Super Ex-Girlfriend," $8.6M, one week; 8) "Superman Returns," $178.34M, four weeks; 9) "The Devil Wears Prada," $97.5M, four weeks; 10) "Cars," $229.48M, seven weeks.

AP

New Sony product

SHARON Cuneta will perform at the consumer launch of Sony's new product, the Sony Sparkling WEGA, at SM Megamall on Aug. 4. A special limited edition CD and DVD of Sharon's gold-certified "Isn't It Romantic?" album will be available with every purchase of the flat-screen CRT TV. Every purchase also entitles buyers to join the "Wish Upon a WEGA" promo, where they stand to win a 60" Sony TV—the exact model that Sharon has in her home.

SHARON CUNETA with Hiroaki Kobayashi, president of Sony Philippines

Pop concert host

BEIJING—CHINA'S Great Hall of the People, the nation's most recognized political building, will soon host pop concerts, Xinhua news agency said Monday.

Constructed after the start of Communist-ruled China in 1949, the government building sits on the edge of Tiananmen Square, the scene of the government's bloody massacre of pro-democracy demonstrators in June 1989.

Five artists are set to rock China's premier political venue this August: Taiwan singers Richie Jen and Huang Pinyuan, Aug. 11; Taiwan's Jeff Chang, Aug. 13; Hong Kong singer Sandy Lam Yiklin, the Aug. 15 and songwriter Xu Wei on Aug. 17.

AFP

'Hustle' on Hallmark Channel

"HUSTLE," which airs starting Aug. 7, 8 p.m. on The Hallmark Channel, follows the fortunes of a gang of expert con artists on the streets of London.

Adrian Lester plays gang leader Mickey Stone. Stone's rival, both in crime methodology and in Stacie's affections, is Danny Blue, the character played by Marc Warren. The series also stars Robert Vaughn, Robert Glenister and Jaime Murray.

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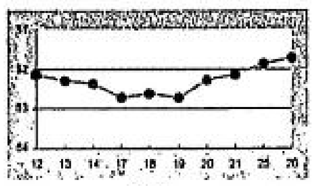
A new record has been set on just one full tank of Petron Xtra Unleaded.

Buyers snap up RP's last global issue for '06

Bids for $750M worth of sovereign bonds hit $12.5B

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



JULY

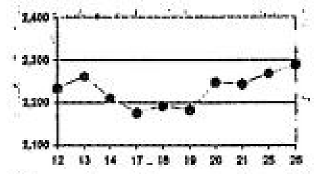
PESO-DOLLAR RATE

P 51.74 = $ 1

As of 5 p.m., July 26, 2006

¥ 116.89 = $ 1

As of 5 p.m., July 26, 2006



(See stock market report on Page B4)

Shares close up 0.95%

SHARE PRICES YESTERDAY CLOSED 0.95 percent higher, extending gains on Wall Street's lead and an easing in oil prices, dealers said.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index added 21.46 points at 2,289.13 after trading between 2,266.04 and 2,290.27 points. The finish was the composite's highest level since June 6 when it settled at 2,289.80.

Volume was 4.09 billion shares worth P1.03 billion ($19.82 million). The broader all-shares index advanced 10.74 points to 1,420.48. Gainers outnumbered losers 66 to 21, with 47 stocks unchanged. *AFP*

By Michelle V. Remo

FOREIGN INVESTORS MADE A SCRAMBLE FOR THE Philippines' $750-million global bond issue, resulting in the oversubscription of the debt instruments by nearly 16 times.

It was the first high-yield issue in Asia, excluding Japan, since an emerging market sell-off in May, a source familiar with the deal yesterday said.

Bids for the 10- and 25-year ROP bonds reached a combined $12.5 billion compared with the government's debt offering of only $750 million, market sources said.

The government sold the bonds in two tranches on Tuesday, reopening its existing 2016 and 2031 issues in an effort to narrow down its budget deficit.

The sale is the last planned by the government this year.

National Treasurer Omar Cruz said the government would not borrow in 2006 to help cover its 2007 requirements, despite the huge interest shown in the latest sovereign debt issue.

"We will not prefund for next year," Cruz said.

About 290 investors from Asia, Europe and the United States participated in the global bond issue, according to fiscal authorities. Citigroup, Deutsche Bank and JP Morgan served as joint lead managers and bookrunners for the debt offering.

"The Republic is pleased with the investor reception and looks forward to continuing this partnership over the long term," Cruz said in a statement.

The bonds due in 2016 carried a coupon rate of 8 percent to yield 7.531 percent. The yield was 246 basis points higher than comparable US treasuries. The bonds maturing in 2031 have a coupon rate of 7.75 percent to yield 7.819 percent, which was 262 basis points over US treasuries.

Analysts said the global bonds issue was perfectly timed, as the international capital market had calmed down over

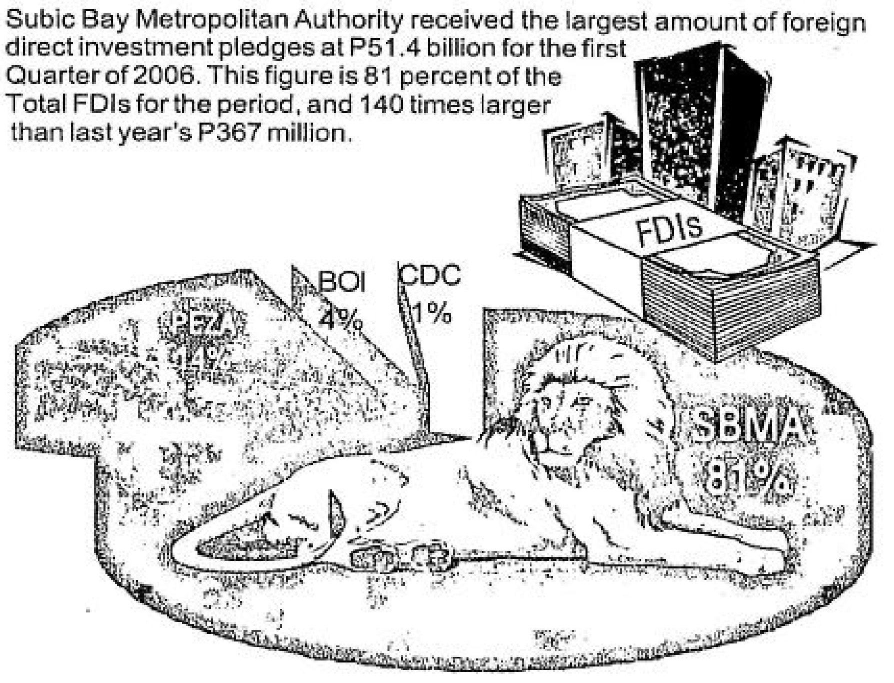
BUYERS/ B2

INQUIRER MONITOR

Figures that matter in our nation's life

SBMA gets lion's share of FDI pledges (First quarter 2006)

Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority received the largest amount of foreign direct investment pledges at P51.4 billion for the first Quarter of 2006. This figure is 81 percent of the Total FDIs for the period, and 140 times larger than last year's P367 million.



Source: National Statistical Coordinating Board

Kate V. Pedroso PDI Research

Insurance firms told to raise capital

THE INSURANCE COMMISSION IS SET to raise the capitalization requirement of life and non-life insurance firms by P100 million every year until 2010.

Insurance Commissioner Evangeline Escobillo said that the yearly increase in capital requirement—a total of P500 million for each company spread over five years—would help improve the level of public confidence on the insurance industry, encouraging more Filipinos to avail themselves of insurance services.

Currently, the capitalization required for each insurance firm is P50 million. Under the Insurance Commission's directive, which has already been submitted to the Department of Finance for approval, the amount would be raised to P100 million by the end of this year, and by P100 million every year until 2010.

Escobillo said that the move was strongly opposed by industry players, which said many insurance firms would not be able to afford to raise their capitalization by P100 million every year, and could even result in the closure of several firms.

But Escobillo said the average capitalization requirement among insurance

INSURANCE/ B2

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▨ **Meralco Q2** profit down 32% /B4
▨ **Japanese more** bullish on RP /B5

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5

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NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that **CEBU CHIP CONNECTIONS, INC. (CCCI)** with plant site at the Mactan Economic Zone (MEZ) has filed with the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) an application for **PIONEER STATUS** to be granted to its production of aluminum bonding wires for electronics and semiconductor industry based on newness of product and technology, which if approved, will entitle the company to six (6) years of Income Tax Holiday. Said application has been officially accepted and is under process in this office.

Any person with valid objections to or pertinent comments on the above-mentioned application may file with the PEZA his/her objections in writing and under oath, within fifteen (15) days from the date of this publication.

Please direct your position papers/comments to the Enterprise Regulations Department of PEZA [Tel. Nos. 551-9544 and 551-3457; telefax 551-3456; and e-mail address: **erd@peza.gov.ph**].

(Sgd.) **LILIA B. DE LIMA**
Director General

(PDI–July 27, 2006)

ISABELA - 1 ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
Victoria, Alicia, Isabela
Tel. No. (078) 6627103 • 6627983 • 6627810
Fax No. (078) 6627103 • 6627917

The Isabela – 1 Electric Cooperative, Inc. (Iselco – 1) wishes to invite interested suppliers for Public Bidding for the supply and delivery of Electrical Materials and Equipments as follows:

Schedule 1 : Pole Line Hardwares
Schedule 2 : Special Equipments
Schedule 3 : Wires and Cables
Schedule 4 : Poles and Crossarms

Interested parties may secure bid documents and checklist of qualification requirements at the office of the PBAC Secretary at Finance Manager's office or contact Mr. Rodollo Acosta at Cel. No. 09192699574 or Engr. Romeo M. Villacampa at Cel No. 09189226973.

The schedule of Bidding activities are as follows:

PARTICULARS	DATE/TIME
Publication	July 25 - 27, 2006
Issuance of bid documents/checklist of qualification requirements	July 28 - Aug. 21, 2006 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
Pre-Qualification conference	Aug. 22, 2006 10:00 AM - 12:00 NN
Submission of bids/Opening	Aug. 22, 2006 / 1:00 PM

Checklist of Qualification Requirements are the following: (To be submitted during the pre-qualification conference)

1. Non-refundable bid documents fee in the amount of Three thousand pesos only (P 3,000.00) in the form of cash.
2. Complete set of legal documents of the company, i.e., SEC Registration, Articles of Incorporation and by laws, company profile, business registration and license papers.
3. Audited Financial Statement (Balance sheet and Income Statement) duly filed/ stamped received by BIR.
4. If represented by an agent of the firm, it must have a letter of Authorization from the President/Management or Owner.

The ISELCO – 1 reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reason, waive any defect thereon and make an award to the bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to the cooperative (ISELCO – 1). The ISELCO – 1 likewise assumes no obligation for whatever losses that may be incurred by the bidders in the preparation of the bids, nor does it guarantee that the award shall be made.

(Sgd.) **Mr. Vicente B. Del Rosario, CPA**
OIC / General Manager

(PDI--July 25, 26 & 27, 2006)

Spate of the nation

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

THE SENATE MAY NOT ALWAYS see eye to eye with Malacañang, but this is not enough reason for this cute administration to kick the Senate out of its home.

As everybody knows, including the macho action stars in the Senate, the chamber holds sessions at the building it shares with the GSIS at the reclaimed area in Pasay City.

The building stands on a property that Malacañang—for whatever reason, such as rendering the Senate homeless—seems bent on giving away to a mysterious entity.

In fact, top officials of the GSIS sent out a spate of letters, asking whether its property (the one it shares with the Senate) was part of a deal that some Malacañang boys were secretly hatching at PNCC. That's the government company that owns the nation's two major tollways called NLE and the SLE.

The deal is supposedly an out-of-court "settlement." I gathered that the entire board of PNCC, headed by its chair Arthur Aguilar, already approved the deal—without a single dissenting vote. Wow!

In that case, I can only surmise that the board must have gotten instructions from Malacañang.

Under the "settlement," PNCC will transfer the ownership of some P5 billion worth of real estate to a certain firm called Radstock Securities.

Nobody knows anything about the company—such as its owners or its line of business—except that it was incorporated in the Bahamas.

Moreover, representing Radstock at PNCC is another strange company called Anglo Chinese, which claims to have a real office in Hong Kong. But who knows?

Aside from the P5 billion worth of property in the payoff deal, *este*, "settlement" *pala*, the PNCC board also voted to give away part of PNCC's holdings in the NLE and the SLE, plus a generous share in the annual income of the tollways.

But here is the cherry on the ice cream on top of the *halo-halo* "settlement": Whoever is behind Radstock will get P1 billion ... C-A-S-H!

And to think that the "settlement" has something to do with a loan of PNCC's predecessor, the construction group called CDCP, from a Japanese conglomerate.

The loan was made almost 30 years ago, when more than half of the population of the entire nation was not yet born.

The Japanese group of course has already written off the collectible from CDCP during the debt crisis of the 1980s.

But somebody bought cheap the Japanese collectible, turned around to PNCC for payment, and is now getting a "settlement" of about P9 billion all told.

The "settlement" seems to have the blessings of Malacañang. From what I gathered, one of its "godfathers" is Gloriaetta's boy who has businesses in Mindanao.

Anyway, top officials of the GSIS got worried over the PNCC deal not because of its sheer magnitude, although the amount is really out of this world, but because they thought the "settlement" would include the GSIS property in the reclaimed area.

My info is that the GSIS legal counsel already wrote PNCC about it. Is the GSIS property part of that shady deal called a "settlement" or not? Only the PNCC board knows, of course!

I only know that, as part of the "settlement," PNCC is giving away a 13-hectare property in Pasay City under TCT-34997.

As far as I know, there is only one lot under one title in Pasay City as big as that and it is the reclaimed area where the GSIS building stands.

Brother, here's more: PNCC already agreed with the mystifying Radstock that the foreign company would have the prior right of attachment over those properties.

That means the Radstock claim goes ahead of other claimants such as the GSIS. Uh-oh, I think the Senate is going homeless!

* * *

RECENTLY, the medium-sized Security Bank celebrated its 55th anniversary with style, holding a grand party cum stage show featuring the high-priced Pops Fernandez.

Now that should not come as a surprise to the business community. It's all part of the usual image-building undertaken by money institutions like Security Bank.

It's just that, in banking, the lavish party was taken as another sign that more and more banks are getting aggressive in wooing clients nowadays.

The same Security Bank, you see, did not spend as lavishly for its "golden" anniversary, or 50th year, in 2001.

And so some bankers are saying that Security Bank could be up to something. Is it for sale or is it buying another bank?

To its relatively new president, an affable fellow called Alberto "Abet" Villarosa, the celebration was only part of a strategy. The bank is going for a bigger market share.

Last year, its profits represented a return of more than 13 percent, and Villarosa is aiming for 15 percent this year, which is the norm among the (for lack of a better word) "good" banks.

Security Bank used to post a return of less than 5 percent. In fact, it has been in serious cost- cutting mode over the past few years in the aftermath of the Asian financial meltdown in 1997.

For instance, to cut operating costs, all branches of the bank would turn off their neon signs, including the highly visible branches on Edsa.

But Villarosa figured that, while Security Bank turned off its neon signs, legions of companies had spent millions of pesos to put up billboards on Edsa.

As a policy, Villarosa now wants the bank to spend a little more on operations to make more money, which partly explains that grand party for the 55th anniversary.

Anyway, Villarosa is positioning Security Bank to carve for itself a market niche (make it a BIG niche) among the medium-sized companies, aside from a chunk of the mortgage business.

But Security Bank was never known as a consumer bank. In fact, it has zero expertise in housing loans. Will it acquire another bank? Hmm ...

Insurance firms told to raise capital

From page B1

firms in Asia was already at an amount equivalent to P500 million. Increasing capitalization requirement is needed to enable insurance firms in the country to be as competitive as their foreign counterparts, she said.

Aside from raising the capital requirement of insurance firms, the commission is also set to implement the risk-based capitalization (RBC). Under the RBC, an insurance firm will be required to put up a separate amount of capital to cover the amount of risk it is exposed to.

With the reforms in the insurance sector, Escobillo hopes that by 2010, 40 percent of Filipinos will be covered by insurance.

Currently, only 12 percent of Filipinos are insured, she added.

She also said that at present, only 5 percent of the total amount of funds invested in the domestic capital market is placed in insurance. Improving the level of confidence on insurance could help achieve the target of increasing the share to as much as 15 percent, Escobillo said.

The Philippine Life Insurance Association Inc. (PLIA), however, said that the increase in the capitalization requirement would only hurt the insurance companies.

PLIA president Peter Coyiuto said what insurance companies could afford was the increase in capitalization requirement from the current P50 million to P100 million, and to the RBC.

Anything more than that could pose problems to the insurance sector, he said.

Coyiuto said the government objective of increasing the number of insurance policy holders to 40 percent of the population might not be attained if several insurance firms were forced to close down as a result of the hike in capitalization requirement.

Michelle V. Remo

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT
A. Francisco Gold Condominium II,
Edsa Cor. Mapagmahal St.
Diliman, Quezon City

Maligayang bati
kay Ka Erdy
at sa kapatiran
ng Iglesia Ni Cristo

sa kanilang

ika-92 anibersaryo sa
ika-27 ng Hulyo, 2006

Mabuhay!

Taos pusong pagbati mula
sa buong **DILG** sa
pamumuno ni
Kalihim Ronaldo V. Puno

Buyers snap up RP's . . .

From page B1

expectations that the US Federal Reserve had already ended the successive hikes in its interest rate. The US Fed had been raising its key policy rate, which now stands at 5.25 percent, since June 2004 to temper inflationary pressures.

But despite the huge volume of bids, Cruz said, the government opted to limit its borrowing to only $750 million, which is even lower than the original program of raising $900 million from the bond offer.

The treasurer said that with the decline in the budget deficit, the government was able to trim its financing requirement for this year.

"I don't want a negative carry," Cruz explained. "If the money will not be used, why will be paying (interest) for it."

The latest global bond issue was the second and last this year. It followed the bond offer in January, when the government raised $2.2 billion.

Under the government's original borrowing program for 2006, it was supposed to raise a total of $3.1 billion from the international commercial market. With the $2.2 billion already generated in January, it should have raised $900 million from the latest bond offer, instead of $750 million.

The change in the borrowing plan for the year was brought about by the improvement in the government's fiscal condition. In the first six months, the budget deficit amounted to only P31.5 billion, way below the P90.4-billion ceiling set for the period.

With a report from Reuters

VICTORIAS
MILLING COMPANY, INC.

INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND TO BID

VICTORIAS MILLING COMPANY, INC., Victorias City, Negros Occidental wishes to invite interested bidders/contractors to pre-qualify and to bid for the **Dredging of Malihao River** this coming Off-Season Repair (OSR 2006).

Interested bidders must submit the following requirements:

- Letter of Intent with Interest to Bid
- VMC accreditation papers for those who are not yet accredited
- Registered and in good standing with SEC or DTI
- Certificate of Registration from BIR
- Certificate of membership from SSS, Philhealth, HDMF, PAG-IBIG, etc.
- Certificate from the Department of Labor and Employment
- Has a good track record and satisfactory performance as attested to by at least three (3) clients
- Latest audited Financial Statements stamped by BIR and certified by a Certified Public Accountant

Bidding kits are available at the MCD Office, VMC Millsite and at the VMC Makati Office during office hours from **July 27 to August 2, 2006**, upon payment of non-refundable fee of P500.00. Kindly submit the needed requirements on or before **August 4, 2006,** to qualify to bid. The pre-bidding conference will be held on **August 7, 2006, 2:30 P.M.** at the **HRD Training Center, VMC Millsite, Victorias City, Negros Occidental**. The commercial bidding will be announced thereafter.

For further inquiries, please contact **Messrs. Carlos S. Quiatchon,** or **Dan C. Labrador** at VMC Millsite at telephone numbers **(034) 399-3696 to 97** and (local) **2351 and 2309**, and **Mr. Ernesto "Toto" Oligo** at VMC Makati Office at telephone numbers **(02)899-0485** and **(02)890-7061** or visit our website www.victoriasmilling.com and e-mail us at mcd@victoriasmilling.com.

Victorias Milling Company, Inc., reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reason, to waive any required formality therein, and to make an award to the bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to the Company. The Company assumes no obligation to compensate or indemnify the bidder/s for any expense/s or loss that they may incur in the preparation of the bids, nor does it guarantee that an award will be made.

(Sgd.) **TERESITA V. ILAGAN**
Chairperson, Senior Bidding Committee

(PDI July 27, 2006)

Senate cool to plea for extra budget

By Michelle V. Remo

SEN. RALPH RECTO SAID THE SENATE found the plan of the executive branch to seek a supplemental budget "foolish".

Recto questioned the need for the administration to seek an additional budget of P50 billion, when the Senate actually agreed to a much higher budget for 2006.

If only Malacañang would agree to the Senate's version of the 2006 national budget, then the executive branch would have more funds to implement its pump-priming projects, he said.

It made no sense for the executive branch to oppose the Senate version of the budget and then push for a supplemental budget if it was serious about pump-priming, he said.

The government is operating under the reenacted 2005 budget because Congress failed to pass the proposed 2006 national budget before they went on recess in June.

The executive branch, led by the Department of Budget and Management and the Department of Finance, asked Congress to approve its proposed P1.1-trillion national budget for 2006.

The Lower House approved the entire amount, but the Senate wanted the proposed budget cut by P60 billion to only P1.04 trillion.

Among the projects thumbed down by the Senate were the "Kilos Asenso Movement" and the "Kalayaan Barangays program," which the Arroyo administration said involved infrastructure development.

The cut in the budget as pushed by the Senate was opposed by the Arroyo administration's economic managers, who said the lower-than-target budget would hinder the government's plan to spend more on infrastructure to spur economic growth.

Peso hits new 2-mo high

Global bond offer lifts currency to 51.74:$1

By Doris C. Dumlao

WARM RECEPTION TO THE PHILIPpine government's $750 million offshore bond offer yesterday lifted the peso to a new two-month high of 51.74 against the US dollar, bucking the downtrend in the regional currency market.

Despite renewed uncertainties ahead of the US Federal Reserve's next interest rate setting in early August, the peso opened strong at 51.86 before succumbing to regional selling pressures to hit an intra-day low of 52.07.

It then rebounded to close near the intra-day high of 51.72 against the greenback.

The peso gained 13 centavos from Tuesday's finish of 51.87:$1, and has now appreciated by 2.5 percent since the start of the year.

Yesterday marked the local currency's strongest finish since ending at 51.71 on May 12. Volume turnout at the Philippine Dealing System remained heavy at $730 million yesterday.

Asked whether the peso's strong rebound was sustainable, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said the local currency was still being supported by good economic fundamentals.

"If you look at the performance of the country's external sector, we continue to have a balance of payments surplus. This means we're getting more foreign exchange inflows than outflows which support the value of the peso," Tetangco said in a briefing.

"Of course, there are other factors that can affect the peso, like what's happening to the US dollar because at the other side of the movement of the peso is the movement of the US dollar. Right now, the peso is being affected by both these developments on the external side and the domestic side," the BSP chief said.

On the external front, he said regional currencies were trading relatively stronger than the US dollar, thus lifting the peso-dollar exchange rate.

"On the domestic side, economic reforms and fiscal reforms improved and further enhanced investor sentiment. That's why we're getting inflows," Tetangco said.

NEW GLOBAL STRATEGY

NEC sees robust growth due to call centers

By Ronnel W. Domingo

TECHNOLOGY FIRM NEC PHILIPpines Inc. expects a double-digit growth this year as it rides on the call center boom with an array of products geared for next-generation systems.

NEC Philippines, which has nine sub-units operating across the nation, is the local subsidiary of Japan's NEC Corp.

It is engaged in technology, circuits design and solutions, electronics, avionics, logistics and telecommunications software.

NEC executive vice president Leonardo H. Santos said NEC Philippines was also expanding its markets to include the fields of manufacturing, utilities and financial services.

It also plans to go to Visayas and Mindanao.

Santos said these moves jived with NEC's new global strategy of trumping up on its "track record in the development of pioneering and innovative products and services."

"After providing for mainly telecommunications solutions in the past 10 years, we would now offer new products and services that cater to the needs of the next-generation networks," he said.

"We can provide handsets, mobile computing solutions, as well as other solutions that enable people to do things for their business, government services and entertainment and living," he said.

Santos said the firm's new offerings would include servers, solutions for wireless local area network hardware and contact centers solutions and Internet protocol, as well as civilian biometric-based identification systems.

Also, he explained that NEC's biometric technology—dubbed the automated fingerprint identification system—was expected not only to make easier government and private sector transactions but also to "move criminal detection into a higher plane" with mobile terminals used for validating the identities of criminals.

Santos said that with this technology, NEC Philippines was exploring the possibility of participating in the government's plans to use biometrics-based identification of citizens including the passport, although things were "still in the conceptual stage."

The official added that NEC Philippines was set to be more active in integrating the features of its solutions into convergent information and communication technology products through partnerships with other solutions providers.

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₱6B in Palawan infra projects stalled

By Ronnel W. Domingo

SOME P6 BILLION IN PUBLIC INvestments under Palawan's medium-term development plan have been stalled as the local government has failed to secure its share of revenues from the Malampaya natural gas production field, said Governor Joel T. Reyes.

Reyes said projects in the pipeline include those related to the development of tourism facilities and services, the improvement of infrastructure and the construction of sea ports.

Other projects involve the putting up of road and electricity networks currently unavailable in about half of the province's 23 towns.

The governor said that based on data from the Department of Energy, Palawan was supposed to have received about P2 billion in revenue shares since 2003.

The natural resource-rich province is in a legal tussle with central authorities stemming from a dispute over revenues from the Malampaya natural gas deposit off the Palawan mainland.

Earlier this year, the Office of the Solicitor General asked the Supreme Court to overturn a Court of Appeals decision issued in December 2005 that says the Malampaya gas field is part of Palawan territory and thus entitles the province to a share in revenues.

Reyes said the provincial council was looking at other options to raise funds like securing a certificate that would allow Palawan to use future earnings as collateral.

Until the province gets to spend Malampaya money, it has no choice but to secure funding from a major source of revenue—the national government itself.

In an earlier interview, Reyes said Palawan was seeking help from the Department of Health on a program for a comprehensive uplifting of the province's health care system.

Sitel opens 2nd RP unit

By Riza T. Olchondra

SITEL CORP., A US-BASED AND NEW YORK Stock Exchange-listed customer support services provider, has opened a 750-workstation site in Mandaluyong City, its second in the country.

The new customer support services unit will complement Sitel's call center in Eastwood, Quezon City.

Sitel's move will further boost the country's position as a leading provider of customer support services to global businesses.

The opening of the new site brought Sitel's total workstations to 1,500, which will enable the company to beef up its client base before the end of this year.

Sitel manages about two million customer interactions per day via the telephone, e-mail, Internet and traditional mail.

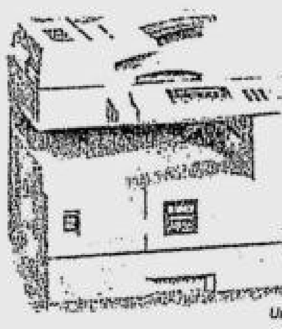
Sitel has more than 39,000 employees in 90 global contact centers that serve customers in 56 countries.

Sitel's Philippine operations, which started only in May 2004, posted growth in terms of increasing number of corporate clients and expansion of businesses coming from its principals.

Sitel's Philippine call centers now provide customer support to 15 corporations, which are mostly in Fortune's top 1,000 firms, from the automotive, financial services, technology, telecommunication, Internet, cable TV, consumer product, energy and utility sectors.

The parent company, which is based in Omaha, Nebraska, has a market capitalization of $220 million. It posted $1.04 billion in global revenue in 2005.

"We are proud to be part of the Philippines' exciting contact center initiatives. The government of the Philippines has been great in promoting our industry and employment in the Philippines. With our global footprint, companies look to us to support their customer care requirements using the best skilled labor force possible," Sitel Corp. CEO Henri Sas added.



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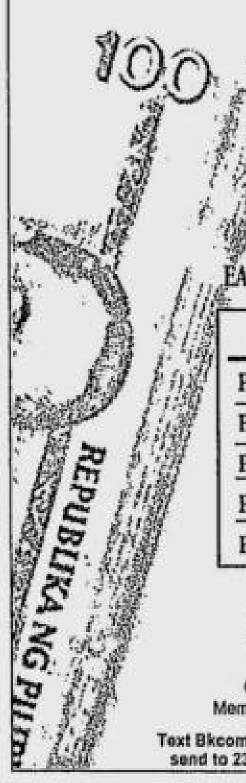

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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Pag-IBIG Fund, through its Bids and Awards Committee – Information Technology Resources (BAC-ITR), invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project	**Supply and Delivery of Seven Hundred Eighty Six (786) units PC Pentium IV**
Approved Budget For the Contract :	**Thirty Five Million Three Hundred Seventy Thousand Pesos (P35,370,000.00)**

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last five (5) years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	July 20, 2006
2. Pre-bid Conference	August 4, 2006 2:00 p.m.
3. Opening of Bids	August 15, 2006 2:00 p.m.
4. Bid Evaluation	August 16-29, 2006
5. Post-qualification	August 30, 2006 to September 5, 2006
6. Notice of Award	September 13, 2006

Bid Documents may be obtained from the Procurement Section, General Services Department, Rm. 704, 7th Floor, Atrium of Makati Building, Makati Avenue, Makati City starting **July 20, 2006** upon payment of a non-refundable amount of **Eight Thousand Pesos (P8,000.00).**

The Pag-IBIG Fund reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any informality or accept such bids as may be considered advantageous to the government. Further, the Fund assumes no obligation whatsoever to compensate or indemnify the bidders for expenses or losses that may be incurred in participating in this bidding.

For further inquiries and/or information, please call Mssrs. Wilfrido Nacito S. Reyes and Jose Maria M. Diaz at 848-82-15, 811-42-62 or visit our Corporate Website at http://www.pagibigfund.gov.ph or e-mail us at hdmfgpis@info.com.ph

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(PDI–July 20 & 27, 2006)

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Meralco Q2 profit down 32%

Provisioning for probable losses a big drag, firm says

By Abigail L. Ho

SLOWER POWER SALES AND the suspension of National Power Corp.'s one-day power sales for several days pulled down the second-quarter net income of Lopez-led Manila Electric Co. by 32.1 percent to P1.12 billion from P1.62 billion in the same period last year.

In a report to the Securities and Exchange Commission, Meralco said the biggest drag on its bottom line remained the provisions for probable losses that it had to set aside in relation to a rates unbundling case pending with the Supreme Court.

The high tribunal upheld a Court of Appeals decision nullifying the Energy Regulatory Commission's approval of Meralco's unbundled rates.

This also nullified an ERC-approved rate hike of 17 centavos per kilowatt-hour (kWh).

Meralco said it had to set aside P500 million every month until the issuance of a decision for losses that an unfavorable decision could bring.

If not for those provisions, Meralco said it would have posted a net profit of P2.16 billion in the second quarter.

Despite the second-quarter decline, the April-June income was a turnaround from the first quarter's net loss of P748 million.

For the first half, Meralco's net income stood at P367 million, a turnaround from the P583-million net loss a year ago.

Pre-provision net profit was placed at P2.34 billion.

Despite slower sales in the second quarter, revenue rose 2.7 percent to P47.89 billion and 7.8 percent in the first semester to P89.5 billion.

Operating expenses also rose 4.7 percent to P46.23 billion in the second quarter and 6.5 percent to P89.05 billion in the first half.

Purchased power cost rose 3.6 percent to P39.44 billion in the second quarter and 6.5 percent to P76.28 billion in the first six months. Operations and maintenance expenses rose 13.3 percent in the second quarter and 20.7 percent in the first semester.

Electricity sales dropped by 0.43 percent to 6,501 gigawatt-hours (GWh) in the first quarter, but managed to increase by 1.71 percent in the first half.

EXCELLENCE
Jollibee chair and CEO Tony Tan Caktiong receives from Sen. Mar Roxas the Dr. Jose P. Rizal Award for management and entrepreneurship. The awards are given out to Chinese-Filipinos who excel in their respective fields.

PAL registers 63% increase in earnings

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

PHILIPPINE AIRLINES, THE COUNTRY's flag carrier, posted a 63 percent growth in net earnings in its last fiscal year ending March 31, 2006, a company report to the Securities and Exchange Commission showed.

This was attributed to higher passenger revenue.

PAL's net earnings rose to $28.7 million in fiscal year 2005-2006 from $17.6 million in the previous year, when the airline posted a turnaround from a net loss of $11.8 million in its fiscal year 2004-2005.

PAL said it would consider a public offering if it would be able to sustain its profitability by another year.

Total revenue as of its last fiscal year grew 15 percent to $1.23 billion from the previous year's $1.08 billion mainly due to the increase in the number of passengers and the net yield per revenue passenger kilometer.

PAL's passenger load factor—or its use of passenger seats based on kilometers travelled—is currently at 70 percent, well within its projections, PAL president Jaime Bautista said.

World airline association International Air Transport Association (IATA), which represents 265 airlines, said in a report that the average passenger load factor for Asia Pacific stood at 74.1 percent from January to April 2006. This is not far from the world's 74.8 percent load factor for the same period.

Bautista said that its load factor had been kept despite higher costs affecting travel activities.

Total expenses in the last fiscal year rose by 14 percent to $1.22 billion due to the spike in flying operations expenses and maintenance costs. Flying operations costs rose to $548.8 million last March from $456.3 million in the same period last year.

Fuel, which recorded the largest increase in expenses, exceeded the previous fiscal year's total by 35 percent or $270.6 million. Aviation fuel prices shot up from an average price a barrel of $53.77 in 2005 to $71.79 in 2006. Higher aircraft and engine repair costs incurred during the covered fiscal year bloated maintenance costs by 26 percent to $176.8 million from $140.5 million.

As of March 31 , PAL's route covered 18 points in the country and 32 international destinations. It introduced service to Beijing in November 2005.

Bautista said PAL was planning to fly daily to Xiamen in China from four times a week by December.

This year, PAL suspended operations in less profitable routes such as Kuala Lumpur last February, Riyadh last March and Laoag also last February for domestic routes.

PAL currently operates a fleet of 32 aircraft: five B747-400s, four A340-300s, eight A330-300s, nine A320-200s, two B737-400 and four B737-300s.

PAL said it was also planning to add two new routes to its flights to the United States to meet growing demand from Filipino travelers.PAL plans to add flights to San Diego (California) via Vancouver in Canada and a straight flight to Seattle (Washington) from Manila.

PAL currently flies to five destinations in the United States namely, to San Francisco, Los Angeles , Las Vegas via Vancouver, Honolulu and Guam.

Highlands Prime raises preferred shares offering

By Daxim L. Lucas

LEISURE PROPERTY DEVELOPER HIGHLANDS Prime Inc. intends to beef up its landholdings in Tagaytay City to support planned high-end real estate projects in the area.

In line with these projects, the firm—controlled by mall tycoon Henry Sy Sr.—will kick off its P2-billion preferred shares issue that will raise funds for its land banking activity, the company's president said.

"The first tranche of the issue will be [worth] up to P800 million," Highlands Prime president Antonio A. Henson said in an interview. This is larger than the earlier target of P500 million.

Henson said the issue would be managed by Banco de Oro Universal Bank's investment banking arm, BDO Capital Corp.

This fund raising plan will be patterned after the Ayala issue, he said referring to last week's P5.8-billion preferred shares issue of Ayala Corp.

Although the terms of Highlands Prime's preferred shares issue have yet to be finalized, Henson said he expected the security to have a tenor of five years.

"We hope to be able to sell it by September," he added.

The pace at which the rest of the P2 billion worth of preferred shares will be offered to targeted institutional or individual investors will depend on the company's own financial requirements as well as the market's reception to the issue, he explained.

On top of the planned land banking, Henson said proceeds from the stocks issue would be used to finance existing projects as well as start "one or two" new projects before the end of the year.

"We have two ongoing projects," he said. "The money will be used for their completion and to start new ones."

Henson said the property market remained very competitive, but added that Highlands Prime had a ready market and an advantage in the high-end leisure property sector.

"We intend to remain focused here," he said. "There is strong demand for our properties."

Earlier, sources disclosed that Highlands Prime would also seek approval from the Securities and Exchange Commission for a plan to hike its capital from P4 billion to P6 billion to fund present and upcoming projects.

DMCI to shell out $30M for Maynilad bid

CONSTRUCTION GIANT DMCI HOLDINGS Inc. will shoulder half of the $60-million minimum financial requirement for the acquisition of 84 percent of the government's stake in utility firm Maynilad Water Services Inc.

Without revealing its bid value, DMCI chief finance officer Herbert Consunji said the company had "on hand" at least $30 million for its 50-percent share in a consortium formed with Metro Pacific Investments Corp. (MPIC).

"We believe we are in a strong position to give it a strong bid," DMCI president Isidro Consunji told shareholders yesterday.

The minimum financial bid for the 84 percent held by the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) should include $22.7 million to subscribe to MWSS' equity, interests on unpaid concession fees of $2.7 million, receivables from Maynilad worth $31 million and arbitration costs of $2.5 million.

The DMCI-MPIC consortium will be competing with four other bidders-- the Ayala consortium led by Manila Water Co.; Japan's Marubeni Corp.; Singaporeans Rubia Holdings and Noonday Asset Management Asia, and India's Karunakaran Ramchand. *Elizabeth L. Sanchez*

Lack of rigs deters drilling, says PNOC

VIENTIANE—EXPLORATION FOR oil in the Philippines this year has been blighted by a lack of oil rigs while higher costs could deter development of new fields, an industry executive said on Wednesday.

Eduardo Manalac, CEO of Philippine National Oil Co. (PNOC), said the country hoped to increase oil and geothermal drilling next year, as well as boost wind power and build a biofuel refinery to reduce dependence on imported fuel.

Manalac said not a single well was drilled this year due to lack of oil rigs.

"For next year, we foresee between three and five exploration wells, contingent on the availability of rigs," he said in an interview during an industry conference in the Laotian capital.

Oil majors are turning back to Asian exploration as reserves dwindle. Royal Dutch Shell is taking part in a 2-D seismic survey of 10,000-km (6,210 miles) offshore northern Palawan island together with PNOC and the Philippine unit of Australia's Nido Petroleum Ltd. This is expected to start next month.

PNOC will drill next year block SC47 in offshore Mindanao with Malaysia's Petronasm and block SC43 in the Ragay Gulf with Britain's Premier Oil Plc and Pearl Energy, Manalac said adding that higher equipment costs and the availability of human expertise were constraining factors.

"The cost of drilling has in fact gone up to a point where we have to be prudent with development plans for stranded oilfields that we think are economic," he said.

However, he said the South China Sea remained relatively unexplored and entry costs were still lower than in many other areas, such as West Africa.

Drilling will not be limited to oil, as the country seeks to boost its 2,000-megawatt geothermal power, the second highest in the world.

Manalac said a new 40-MW geothermal plant would start in Negros by next March.

PNOC will drill in southern Leyte later this year, which could provide up to 100 MW of power.

The Philippines is also developing biofuels as alternative vehicle fuel.

"The strategy involves an integrated approach strong on renewable resources—to start development of large plantations of jatropha and to build a biofuel refinery with a capacity of 240,000 tons per year," Manalac said, adding that PNOC hoped to complete this by next year.

In the meantime, the country is finalizing the funding for the first stage of a 120- MW of wind power plant in northern Luzon, to add to 25 MW online. *Reuters*

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of July 26, 2006)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
FINANCIAL					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	5.5	5.5	5.3	5.3	7,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	31	31.5	31	31	3,688,800
Bank of the Phil. Islands	52	53	52	52.5	972,200
China Banking Corp.	860	860	860	860	2,110
Citystate Savings Bank	20.25	20.25	20.25	20.25	600
Export And Ind. Bank A	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	730,000
Equitable Pci Bank, Inc.	77.5	79.5	77.5	79.5	146,600
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	37.5	38	37	37.5	830,800
Philippine National Bank	34	35	34	34.5	72,300
Phil. Savings Bank	39	40	39	40	10,300
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	18	19	17.75	18.75	304,200
Security Bank Corp.	48	48	48	48	1,700
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
Bankard Inc.	0.6	0.76	0.6	0.75	110,000
Citiseconline.Com Inc.	1.8	1.82	1.8	1.82	441,000
First Metro Invest. Corp	30	31	30	31	26,200
Manulife Financial Corp.	1610	1625	1610	1625	220
Pci Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.02	1.04	1.02	1.04	100,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	215	215	215	215	2,500
Sun Life Financial, Inc.	1975	1975	1975	1975	80
Ivantage Corp.	1.28	1.3	1.28	1.28	408,000
INDUSTRIAL					
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
First Gen Corp.	43.5	44	43.5	44	94,200
First Phil Hldgs Corp	45.5	45.5	45	45.5	133,600
Manila Electric Co. A	15	15.25	15	15.25	163,500
Manila Electric Co. B	24.25	24.25	24	24.25	333,200
Manila Water Co. Inc.	7.7	7.9	7.7	7.9	2,054,000
Petron Corp.	4.15	4.3	4.15	4.25	5,529,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.92	0.92	0.92	0.92	100,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	157,000
CADP Group Corp.	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.75	56,000
Cen Azucar de Tarlac	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	1,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	23.25	23.5	23.25	23.5	21,500
Jollibee Foods Corp.	32.5	34	32.5	34	759,600
Pancake House Inc.	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	1,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	3.55	3.85	3.55	3.75	10,079,000
San Miguel Corp. A	65.5	66	65.5	66	75,900
San Miguel Corp. B	72	72	71.5	71.5	98,100
Universal Robina Corp	19	19	18.75	18.75	843,300
Vitarich Corp.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	200,000
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	0.25	0.28	0.25	0.27	6,260,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	1.56	1.56	1.56	1.56	1,523,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	4.65	4.8	4.65	4.75	3,498,000
Phil Nat'l Const. Corp.	2.55	2.55	2.55	2.55	120,000
Republic Cement Corp.	1.28	1.36	1.28	1.36	140,000
CHEMICALS					
Euro-Med Lab. Phil. Inc.	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	20,000
Metro Alliance Holdings	0.185	0.185	0.185	0.185	10,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65	20,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Global Equities Inc.	0.115	0.13	0.115	0.13	80,150,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.0675	0.0675	0.0675	0.0675	1,000,000
Panasonic Mfg Phil Corp	6.7	6.7	6.7	6.7	10,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	19,000,000
Ayala Corp.	402.5	405	400	402.5	137,260
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	5.2	5.4	5.2	5.4	267,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.024	0.024	0.024	0.024	9,200,000
A. Soriano Corp.	1.8	1.82	1.8	1.8	1,000,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	17,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.91	0.94	0.91	0.94	1,060,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp	1.32	1.32	1.3	1.3	24,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	7,500
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.1	1.14	1.08	1.12	20,284,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	4.2	4.3	4.15	4.2	1,469,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	2.8	2.9	2.8	2.9	163,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc	6.2	6.2	6.1	6.1	1,098,000
Keppel Holdings	1	1	1	1	1,000,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.185	0.19	0.185	0.185	2,270,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	420,000
SM Investments Corp.	222	222	220	220	80,600
South China Resources Inc	0.8	0.85	0.8	0.85	410,000
Unioil Res. & Holdings Co	0.0575	0.0575	0.055	0.055	900,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	12.5	12.75	12.5	12.75	2,152,600
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.32	0.34	0.32	0.34	300,000
Belle Corp.	1.06	1.06	1.06	1.06	3,606,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.27	0.27	850,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	2.14	2.18	2.14	2.18	94,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.225	0.24	0.22	0.235	11,260,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.45	0.47	0.45	0.47	3,490,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.34	1.38	1.34	1.38	9,037,000
Interport Res.	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	12,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.007	0.007	0.0065	0.0065	25,000,000
Keppel Phils. Prop. Inc.	0.74	0.74	0.74	0.74	10,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.2	0.22	0.2	0.22	2,450,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.4	0.41	0.4	0.41	410,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.4	1.42	1.4	1.42	32,562,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	590,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.18	0.22	0.18	0.22	30,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	10.75	10.75	10.75	10.75	21,300
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	900,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	7.8	7.9	7.8	7.9	3,106,000
SERVICE					
MEDIA					
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp	1.28	1.3	1.28	1.28	165,000
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc	1.2	1.24	1.2	1.24	3,021,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	965	975	960	965	22,270
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.5	3.6	3.5	3.6	3,967,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1925	1950	1925	1950	98,760
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Ionics Inc.	1.84	1.96	1.84	1.96	117,000
Philweb Corp.	0.032	0.032	0.032	0.032	22,800,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	25,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	14	14.25	14	14.25	69,100
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc	0.88	0.88	0.88	0.88	130,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Acesite Phils Hotel Corp.	5.8	5.9	5.7	5.7	1,009,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.36	1.38	1.36	1.38	240,000
Manila Jockey Club	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	6,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.195	0.195	0.195	0.195	50,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.49	0.5	0.49	0.5	1,270,000
EDUCATION					
Centro Escolar University	8.4	8.4	8.4	8.4	1,000
Ipeople Inc	3.05	3.2	3.05	3.1	470,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Jth Davies Holdings Inc.	16	16	16	16	1,000
Macroasia Corp.	2.16	2.16	2.14	2.14	75,000
Paxys, Inc.	11.25	11.5	11	11.25	397,600
Prime Gaming Phils., Inc.	40	40	40	40	30,000
MINING & OIL					
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	3.8	3.9	3.8	3.8	2,043,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc B	3.8	3.95	3.8	3.85	993,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	40,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	7.6	7.7	7.5	7.6	871,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.27	0.28	0.27	0.27	12,540,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.29	0.31	0.29	0.3	8,260,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.025	0.028	0.025	0.028	1,658,500,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.028	0.032	0.028	0.031	612,500,000
Omico Corp.	0.011	0.011	0.01	0.011	1,150,300,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	3.95	4	3.9	3.95	2,425,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	3.95	4	3.9	3.95	2,896,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	26.5	26.5	26	26.5	177,000
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.38	0.41	0.38	0.41	2,870,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.54	0.54	0.54	0.54	530,000
OIL					
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	240,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	209,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	45,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	1.24	1.28	1.24	1.26	654,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	1.26	1.28	1.26	1.26	501,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	16.5	17	16.5	16.75	126,600
PREFERRED					
Ayala Corp. Pref. B	102	102	102	102	300
PLDT (10% Pref) Series M	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	200
PLDT (10% Pref) Series O	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series P	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	200
PLDT (10% Pref) Series S	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	400
WARRANTS, PHIL. DEPOSIT RECEIPTS, ETC.					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp (Pdr)	16.5	16.5	16.5	16.5	600,000

CURRENCIES

July 26, 2006 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.794913	1.000000	51.9710
Japan	Yen	0.006782	0.008532	0.4434
United Kingdom	Pound	1.462560	1.839900	95.6214
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.102208	0.128578	6.6823
Switzerland	Franc	0.634256	0.797894	41.4673
Canada	Dollar	0.696498	0.876194	45.5367
Singapore	Dollar	0.500701	0.629882	32.7356
Australia	Dollar	0.598579	0.753012	39.1348
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.108634	2.652661	137.8614
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.211965	0.266652	13.8582
Brunei	Dollar	0.499129	0.627904	32.6328
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000087	0.000110	0.0057
Thailand	Baht	0.020927	0.026326	1.3682
UAE	Dirham	0.216432	0.272272	14.1502
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.258000	65.3795
Argentina	Peso	0.258298	0.324939	16.8874
Brazil	Real	0.361439	0.454690	23.6307
Denmark	Kroner	0.134011	0.168586	8.7616
India	Rupee	0.017000	0.021386	1.1115
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.215715	0.271370	14.1034
Mexico	New Peso	0.072908	0.091718	4.7667
New Zealand	Dollar	0.496355	0.624415	32.4515
Norway	Kroner	0.125723	0.158160	8.2197
Pakistan	Rupee	0.013203	0.016609	0.8632
South Africa	Rand	0.113502	0.142786	7.4207
Korea	Won	0.000835	0.001050	0.0546
Sweden	Kroner	0.108102	0.135992	7.0676
Syria	Pound	0.015313	0.019264	1.0012
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.024247	0.030503	1.5853
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000370	0.000466	0.0242

COCONUT MASK There is a growing market in Vigan City, Ilocos Sur for masks made from coconuts. The masks sell for P20 each.
EV ESPIRITU / PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

Japanese more bullish on RP

Firms' sentiment improves in July

By Ronnel W. Domingo

JAPANESE FIRMS' BUSINESS SENTIMENT on the country improved by 5.3 points in July but stayed on the negative side for the 15th consecutive month.

The Japan External Trade Organization's monthly survey showed that Japanese firms operating in the country gave the business environment a rating of negative 10.1, although the outlook for the next month showed further improvement to negative 2.2 points.

Jetro said improvement reflected the strong demand in overseas markets for goods produced by the Philippines' electric and electronic equipment sector.

The ratings measure year-on-year changes in business outlook for the current month and the next two or three months.

The ratings are expressed as diffusion indices, which show the difference between positive and negative responses.

Confidence for the Philippines was last seen on the positive side in April 2005 when survey respondents gave the country a rating of 1.6 points.

Since Jetro started the poll in June 2001, Philippine ratings had bottomed at negative 40.9 in December of that year and peaked at 22.9 in September 2004 before dipping to current ratings.

According to Jetro's latest poll, an improved-but-still-negative rating for the country came amid a continued mixed sentiment among Japanese firms in five original members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations including Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand.

Jetro said the overall sentiment for the five countries declined by a point to negative 9 compared to the June rating and that the index remained in the negative for the eighth straight month.

Ratings for the region were all in the negative except for Singapore which rated 20.2 points.

Indonesia was rated the worst at negative 48.4 while Malaysia got negative 18.4 and Thailand had 11.9.

Jetro explained that the aim of the survey was to provide up-to-date information on business conditions in the Asian economies to help companies develop more effective business strategies.

Firms were asked to compare earnings prospects, supply and demand, inventory, sales prices and accounts receivable with the same period a year earlier.

Philippine-based respondents in the May survey included 188 firms.

Tuna firms seek reentry into Japan

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE TUNA INDUSTRY HAS ASKED FOR GOVernment's help in convincing the Japanese government to lift its nine-year ban on Philippine filter-smoked tuna products.

According to industry representatives led by Socsksargen Federation of Fishing and Allied Industries Inc., the sector's petition to again export its products to Japan should be included in the government's agenda as it negotiates a Free Trade Agreement with Japan.

"This should be an issue of priority in the said negotiations although this,is a non-tariff barrier that Japanese authorities imposed since May 1997," said Fresh Frozen Tuna Association consultant Dick Alves in a forum yesterday.

Japan's Department of Health and Welfare (also known as Kuseisho) imposed the ban in May 1997, which prohibited the production, sale and importation of all smoked tuna and tilapia products from the Philippines, Indonesia and Thailand, stating that the smoking process posed a health hazard.

Alves said the Japanese authorities could not provide the scientific basis to back the claim.

Domestic tuna exporters use the filtered, purified smoke from wood to preserve the freshness of fresh tuna products.

"The Philippine filtered smoked tuna products have passed stringent measures and are now being exported to the United States and other countries are the same products deemed unsafe by Japan. There must be a rationale to this," said Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) Director Malcolm Sarmiento in a letter to Japanese Minister Nakagawa Shouichi for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.

Transco sells lines to Ilocos power coop

By Cristina Arzadon
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

LAOAG CITY—THE NATIONAL TRANSMISSION Corp. (Transco) has turned over more than P94 million worth of facilities to the power cooperative here as part of the firm's divestment program.

Alan Ortiz, Transco president and chief executive officer, signed a divestment contract with the Ilocos Norte Electric Cooperative (Inec) last week for the sale of five sub-transmission lines connecting the towns of Currimao, San Nicolas, Sarrat, Marcos, Piddig and this capital city.

The transmission lines, rated at 69 kilovolts and covering some 53.33 circuit kilometers, will now be owned and maintained by Inec. The transmission assets are payable to Transco in 20 years.

"The sale will boost the services of Inec [to its consumers] and make Ilocos Norte a more attractive investment area," Ortiz said during the contract signing on July 21.

With the sale of the facilities, Inec will no longer shell out some P1 million a month for the use of Transco lines.

Romillas Pascual, Inec general manager, said the cooperative would study whether power rates being charged the consumers could be reduced with the exclusion of "wheeling" or transmission charges from their payments.

"There can be a reduction in power rates. But this is only after the approval of the Energy Regulation Commission," Pascual said.

Inec officials, however, have yet to come out with a scheme on how they would raise and source the payment of the divested assets.

Ortiz said the divestment contract with Inec was Transco's 27th asset sale since it started selling sub-transmission assets to qualified distribution utilities as mandated by the Electric Power Industry Reform Act.

Transco's sales were pegged at more than P1.5 billion, comprising 9,256 structures and spanning 1,048 circuit kilometers.

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Take life and love further with Globe Super Sulit offers

ONE OF MODERN LIVING'S BITTERsweet ironies is that our quest for a better life often takes us away from those we love the most. Distance, schedules, work, studies -- all these require we leave the comfort of home and security of the family for periods often too long to bear.

Globe empathizes with our longing to reach out to the people who matter most to us. At the same time, the company that has enriched our lives with so many connectivity options these past years also understands the need for practical, yet no less valuable means of keeping the communication lines open with family and friends. It is such a comfort to know then that Globe's Super Sulit Deals address all these needs, while offering affordability and value for our hard-earned money.

Anyone who loves someone should find Globe's Unlimitxt service a very valuable feature. Unlimited texting at an affordable price lets working moms and dads text each other sweet nothings throughout the day to keep the flames of love alive. The same benefits apply to young men who are courting their sweethearts. Or young girls trading gossip about their crushes. Now a permanent feature, Unlimitxt or unlimited Globe-to-Globe texts have these affordable and great value-for-money rates: P15 per day, P25 for two days, and P50 for five days.

When a busy schedule gives you just enough time for a quick call, remember to prefix your loved ones' Globe number with 232. Globe's P0.10 per second charging for Globe to Globe calls lets you say a quick "Hi!" or "I love you" -- precious calls on precious seconds that are sure to make your loved one's day. This way, you can brighten their day without worrying about overspending for a few seconds' worth of call.

If a few short seconds won't do, then Globe's P10 per three-minute call offer is just the right deal. Anytime you need to make an extended call, just prefix their number with 235 followed by the 10-digit mobile number so you don't have to worry about being overcharged. You will only be charged P3.33 for every minute. This means longer talk time for moms who want to keep tabs on their kids, or dads who need to apologize profusely to their wives for not being able to get home early.

While it's best to get the entire family on Globe in order to avail of these valuable deals, Globe also understands the need to communicate with friends or other family members on other networks. Globe's P0.90 per text to all networks is a convenient, pocket-friendly deal that needs no sign-up nor registration procedure and gives you more value per text message -even if it's just to reply a polite "Hahaha!" to that corny joke that Kuya sent you a few minutes ago.

All of these Super Sulit deals are Globe's way of giving you the versatility to connect with your family, whenever and wherever you need to, because Globe cares about always keeping you in touch with the ones you love. Whether it's a quick "I love you!" or a reassuring "Don't worry, here's what we'll do…," the right words at the right time are often all it takes to bring a family closer together. Now, thanks to Globe's budget-friendly Super Sulit deals, staying connected has never been so easy.

LIPA DENTAL SOCIETY CELEBRATES 19TH YEAR

The PDA-Lipa Dental Society (LDS) will celebrate its 19th Foundation Anniversary with Induction Ceremonies on July 28, at Club Victorina, Baseview Homes, Lipa City. Incoming president Ma. Doreen Elefante-Ilustre and her officers say they will continue with what the LDS does best - making significant contributions towards upgrading the quality of service delivered by its members and improving the oral health status of the residents of Lipa City. The event is sponsored by United Laboratories Inc. Standing from left: Drs. Ferdie H.de Veyra, Ruby Magbuhat-Comia, Michelle Torres-Lajara, Ethel Rosales-Lipat, Robert M. Garcia, Maritess S. Templo, Janet A. Adelantar, Neslyn L. Torres and Eugenio M. Bautista. Seated from left: Drs. Crescen M. Tibay, Atena M. Gonzales (outgoing president), Belen I. Bautista, Ma. Doreen Elefante-Ilustre (incoming president), Nina R. Ilagan and Carmela Lopez-Maravilla.

The country's most trusted washing machine is Sharp

THE CONSUMERS HAVE SPOKEN, AND THE verdict is in. When it comes to washing machines, more Filipinos trust Sharp than any other brand in the market.

Long recognized as the leading brand of washing machines in the country, Sharp has received the gold award in Reader's Digest's Trusted Brands survey for 2006.

Reader's Digest asked consumers to nominate their most Trusted Brand in 42 product categories based on trustworthiness, credibility of image, quality, value, how well each brand understands consumers' needs, and its ability to innovate.

Figures show that this overwhelming trust in the Sharp brand also translates into actual consumer spending. In a market performance coup, Sharp Washing Machines have also bagged the Number One ranking at the 2005 GfK Asia Awards.

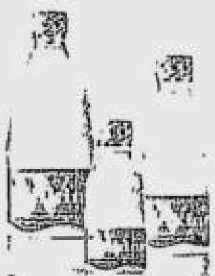
The award is based on a retail review conducted by Growth from Knowledge (GfK), a worldwide independent marketing research company. Findings have shown that Sharp accounts for a dominant 36 percent sales of washing machines in Metro Manila.

Whereas the Reader's Digest survey takes into account consumer perceptions of the brand, the GfK audit measures actual sales to individual customers in appliance stores all over the region.

Sharp's best-selling BabadMagic and AquaMagic series, and its innovative Silvermagic washing machines are a clear testimony to the kind of commitment and character that is behind the brand. Relentlessly pushing to create state-of-the-art appliances that employ the latest technology, Sharp is living up to its mandate of making everything better, simpler, sharper. It is the same commitment that has won the approval and recognition of consumers all across Asia.

Product FILES

New look, same Wilkins

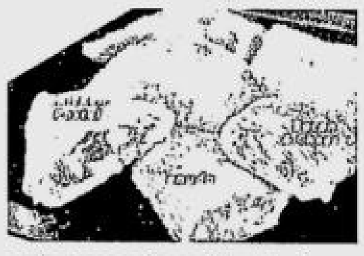


THROUGH THE YEARS, ONLY ONE BRAND OF bottled water has proven market leadership in the Philippines. Only one name stands out in providing consumers quality through safety and purity. That brand and that name is none other than Wilkins Distilled Drinking Water, a product that has been in the market for over a decade. Even with these accomplishments, Wilkins shows no sign of resting on its laurels. The brand has to continuously develop and strengthen its position as the number one bottled water in the market. This is why Wilkins even developed a newer and crisper tagline, 'Pure and Safe, Without a Doubt'. Additionally, to add a new chapter in its long history of excellence, Wilkins presented the new look of purity and safety with a sleek new bottle design. The new packaging is ingenious, innovative, and inspiring. It also maintains the same Wilkins goodness that consumers have grown to love. The brand maintains its promise: No bacteria, no parasites, no life threatening diseases that can harm your family. Wilkins may have changed, yes, but only on the outside.

Come taste this sweet crepe

SHE JUST LOVES TO EAT SWEET crepes and would sometimes bring friends and family to taste all the varieties that Crepes & Cream has to offer. Janelle Chua eats her Mango Mania Sweet Crepe and enjoys its combined taste of assorted fillings of mango cream, ice cream and nuts. Sweet Crepes are served in cone-shaped crepes and are eaten with a spoon. The Crepes &Cream crepes are served the Japanese way - they are rolled and eaten with a spoon. There are now five outlets of Crepes & Cream located at The Fort, The Podium, Mall of Asia and Rockwell Powerplant Mall.

New from Red Ribbon: Baked Empanada



IMAGINE BITING INTO FRESHLY baked, rich, savory and flaky pastry stuffed with sumptuous fillings. Savor the new Red Ribbon Baked Empanada. Prepared only from the choicest ingredients, these snacks have layers of delectable flakes under an appetizing crust. Each morsel of its filling is wrapped in a delicious sauce that satisfies every bite. Take your pick from these three variants: Chicken Pastel, Menudo or Bacon and Cheese. Baked Empanada is a delicious addition to Red Ribbon's array of good mood food (premium cakes, breads and pastries) which, for the last 27 years, has been a part of the Filipinos' dining preferences and special celebrations. Grab a bite or two of baked empanada and more of Red Ribbon's mouthwatering sweets, snacks and meals. To enjoy Red Ribbon products in the comfort of your own, office or just about anywhere, call its delivery hotline number: 747-7777.

Bits Clips

2006 Social Work Oath Taking Ceremony

SENATOR JAMBY MADRIGAL will guest the 2006 Social Work Oath Taking Ceremony on Aug. 4, p.m. at the Manila Hotel. She will induct and address the 850 Social Work passers in the June SW Licensure Examinations. As Chairman of the Senate's Committee on Youth, Women, and Family Relations Senator Madrigal is expected to highlight Social Workers' contributions in promoting Filipinos' well being and development, especially that of marginalized families. Furthermore she will deal with the challenges and opportunities that Social Workers face globally in human development work while alleviating the conditions of the most vulnerable and at-risk sectors of Philippine society. Central in her talk will be her Committee's initiatives and achievements in handling various issues and concerns that confront youth, women, and families.

Wanted: Philippine team to the 3rd Asean Quiz

THE NATIONAL ASEAN QUIZ ORGANIZING COMmittee is calling qualified fourth year high school students of public and private schools nationwide to vie for the chance to represent the country in the 3rd Regional Asean Quiz to be held in Putrajaya, Malaysia on Sept. 18-23. Members of the Philippine Team to the 3rd Asean Quiz shall be selected from regional representatives through the holding of the National Asean Quiz on Aug. 4 to 7 in Manila. Top three (3) students with the highest scores shall compose the Philippine delegation and compete with students from other Asean countries in Putrajaya, Malaysia in September. In addition to the trip to Malaysia, the national winners shall each receive cash prize and a medal. Their respective school shall also receive a trophy. To qualify for the national competition, a participant must be a bonafide fourth year high school student from a public or private school, 16-19 years old at the time of the competition, with above average grade in Social Studies in the last two quarters of school year 2005-2006, proficient in both oral and written English language, and officially endorsed by DepEd Regional Directors.

Creba 2006 annual confab

THE CHAMBER OF REAL ESTATE AND BUILDERS' Associations (Creba), will launch its Annual National Convention during the chamber's monthly business meeting on July 27, 12 noon at the Intercontinental Hotel. The real estate convention held annually by Creba will be held on Oct. 19, 20 and 21, at the Camp John Hay, Baguio, with its theme: "Pro-active Response to Property Trends & Opportunities". Interested participants may call Creba secretariat at 373-2270 to 75.

MVP on Wheels in Cavite

AVID HOMEMAKERS AND SERIOUS COOKS ARE invited to become part of Monterey Meatshop's MVP on Wheels special cooking demonstration to be held on July 29, , 3-5 p.m. at Imus covered court in Cavite. The event featuring Mobile Kusina chef Eric Gualberto and hosted by SMC All Stars Ed Cordero and Joey Sta. Maria will showcase easy-to-do recipes along with valuable tips for preparing delightful meals using choice Monterey products. Participants are also in for exciting raffle draws and games with fun prizes. Registration starts at 2 p.m. Admission is free. Special gift packs await the first 50 registered participants. MVP on Wheels is a cooking event for all. To register for free, simply present your MVP card upon registration or sign up for an MVP card on site. For inquiries on how to join, call (02) 633-MEAT.

PBT presents 'Giselle'

IN CELEBRATION OF ITS 20TH ANNIVERSARY, THE Philippine Ballet Theatre, the country's foremost classical ballet company, will open this season with the staging of a well-loved romantic ballet, Giselle. Performances will be from July 13 to 16 at the Cultural Center of the Philippines and July 27 to 30 at Meralco Theatre. Tickets are available at Ticket-World outlets. For inquiries, please call the PBT office at 632-8848 and 0921-9150603 or TicketWorld at 891-5610 or the CCP box office at 832-3704/06.

Crown Asia's new home series

CROWN ASIA PROPERTIES Inc has been known to be the biggest home-builder in the Philippines for over 10 years now, offering quality homes at affordable prices. And now, at the advent of Crown Asia's new home series, you can choose from Crown Asia's Signature Homes and Proud Hometowns to fit your lifestyle and budget.

Signature Homes:

At Cottonwoods, your American country-style residence blends seamlessly with the scenery. And with bigger houses and lot cuts that allow lofty ceilings and roomy interiors, you'll liven up each day feeling at home with nature.

A thousand lights in Italian, Mille Luce exudes qualities of what an exclusive residential and commercial property should have: Italian-style homes. Forested charm. Grand view of the stars and the cityscape. And as the thousands of lights illuminate where you stand you'll realize you're on the bright side of life.

Proud Hometowns:

Woodberry lets you relish the convenience of living in a community right next to an exclusive school and major thoroughfares. Giving you more time to spend bonding moments with your loved ones inside your Neo-American inspired home. Moments well spent. Life well lived.

All the fresh air and breathtaking sites you can relish. Set at one of the highest points in Antipolo, the Maia Alta community offers captivating rolling terrain and an unobstructed valley view of Laguna de Bay. And with expansive windows favorably placed, there's more to behold inside your new Italian-inspired home.

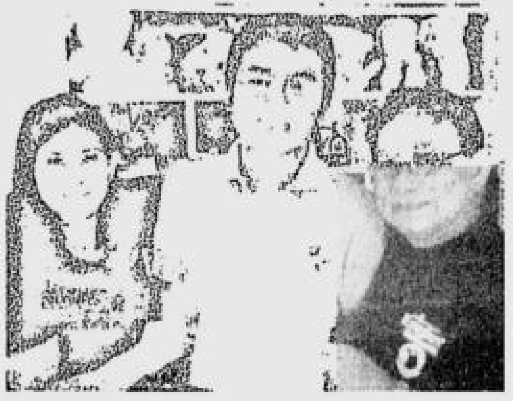
For the month of July, you will be able to avail of great discounts, promos, and flexible terms on all our projects in Quezon City and Antipolo City. For more information and inquiries, call 723-5013 or 0916-3346635 and look for Aimee/Anna. E-mail at crownasia_mktg@yahoo.com.

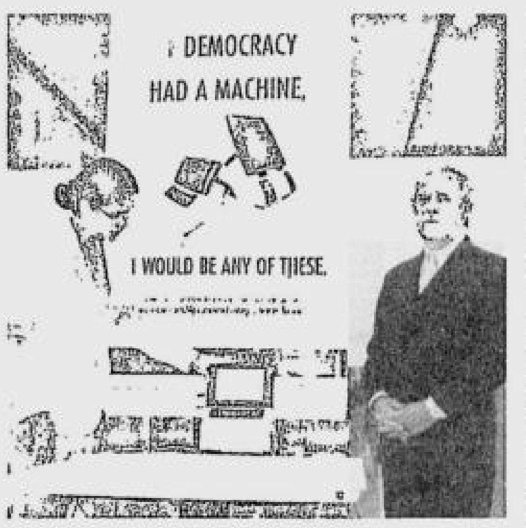
NOKIA PURRS WITH THE PUSSYCAT DOLLS

Nokia proudly presents the Pussycat Dolls, the hottest singing sensation to hit the music scene. Composed of singers Nicole Scherzinger, Jessica Sutta, Carmit Bachar, Ashley Roberts, Kimberly Wyatt, and Melody Thornton, Pussycat Dolls started off as a burlesque dance revue, which has now become an international A-list phenomenon that has spawned chart-topping hits such as 'Don't cha', 'Buttons', 'Beep', and 'Stickwitu'. Nokia continues to stick with today's youth by pumping up the jam with its music-capable mobile phones. Instant audio entertainment is just a button away with Nokia's upcoming line up of mobile phones with dedicated music functions. The Pussycat Dolls are set to perform at a one-night only concert at the Araneta Coliseum on July 28, at 8 p.m.

DREAMS DO COME TRUE

Philam Plans, the country's leading education plan provider, presented Von Andrei Medina, BS Psychology Magna Cum Laude of De La Salle University - Lipa Batangas, the Scholastic Achievement Award and a cash incentive for his outstanding academic performance. Shown in photo is Helen Medina (left) proud mother of Von Andrei (center) together with Francisco Bautista (right) their agent and one of Philam Plans' top agency managers. Medina's parents are OCWs in Hong Kong. Helen is a domestic helper and the father, Emilio, works as a driver. Both are thankful to have Philam Plans as its savings partner for their son's education.





THE RIGHT TECHNOLOGY IS THE KEY TO FRAUD-FREE ELECTIONS

International expert Robert Cook, in a business forum at the Arkipelago, RCBC Plaza in Makati City, stressed the importance of choosing the right technology that will deliver economic advantages, faster results, auditability, security and fraud-free elections. He, along with Smartmatic Corporation's pre-sales specialist Yuli Quintero, demonstrated to the members of the Economic Journalists Association of the Philippines (Ejap) the superiority of Smartmatic/Sequoia Automated Elections System. Its voter-verifiable paper audit trail and comprehensive system security were just among the distinctive features that made members of the press admire this elections technology. For more information about Smartmatic Corp, you may visit www.smartmatic.com.

BEACH HUT READY FOR THE WORLD

Dennis Balajadia, chief evangelizing officer of the Quezon City-based Naturale Laboratories Inc, creators of Beach Hut is proud to announce that after two years of careful planning by a team of experts led by Lloyd Laboratories, tests of Beach Hut's sun protection properties in Australia, and plenty of back and forth trips to sundry Philippine beaches, Beach Hut is ready to come out in the open. This clear spray sunblock product is manufactured for Balajadia's company by Cosmetics Specialists Inc, a Bureau of Food and Drugs-approved plant located in Bulacan. Beach Hut is a formula with the Ultraviolet-A and Ultraviolet-B protection of SPF 36. All the ingredients are imported. On local soil, Beach Hut has invaded Boracay and Puerto Galera. Today, Beach Hut has started making the rounds of beaches cities worldwide. With Beach Hut's unique skin-safety features, reasonable prices, and a creative and experienced marketing team. Beach Hut is about to conquer the world while protecting its sun worshippers. Photo shows Dennis Balajadia, with his wife Emily Balajadia (both standing), assisting their dynamic , young staff. For more information on Beach Hut, call 376-2283 and look for Ms Tippie Tan or log on to www.lotionsucks.com

PNOC-ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
Energy Complex, Merritt Road
Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City
Tel. No. 893-1320, Local 5288

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND BID

The PNOC-Energy Development Corporation is inviting all interested suppliers to apply and submit sealed bids for the supply and delivery of the following:

Winch Trailer Mounted with Accessories under GQ 616730
Approved Budget: PHP 4,900,000.00

Eligibility forms and bidding documents shall be available for issuance at the above address c/o **Mr. Anthony E. Ciriaco** starting **July 27, 2006** and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P400.00 per document.

For purposes of clarifying certain matters, a pre-bidding conference shall be held on **August 03, 2006, 2:00 p.m.** at the above address.

Applications for eligibility and sealed bids shall be submitted to, and registered with the PNOC-EDC Supply Management Department at the above address, and thereafter dropped in the padlocked bid box thereat not later than **2:00 p.m. (Supply Management Office Wall Clock Time) of August 17, 2006.** Public opening of bids shall follow immediately thereafter. **Late bids shall not be accepted.**

Prospective bidders shall signify conformance to the bidding terms and conditions, as required, and shall ensure the same through proper submission/execution. Source of funding is from Internal Cash Generation of PNOC-EDC. All bids should be within the Approved Budget for the Contract in order to qualify.

PNOC-Energy Development Corporation reserves the right to annul the bidding process, to reject any or all bids, to waive any informality in the bids received and to accept such bid which is most advantageous to PNOC-EDC without thereby incurring liability to the affected bidder or bidders or any obligation to inform the affected bidder or bidders of the ground(s) for PNOC-EDC's action.

Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI - July 27 & Aug. 3, 2006)

Metro Psych Facility
Roads and Bridges to Recovery

NOW HIRING

For Pasig Branch:

PSYCHOLOGY GRADUATE and KARATE/KARATEDO INSTRUCTOR.

Look for MARTIN at 643-6056/643-5788 Loc 112 or 113.

For Cebu Branch:

REGISTERED NURSE
ART TEACHER
OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST
GUITAR TEACHER

Look for GINA at (032)344-2141

Republic of the Philippines
OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN
Agham Road, Diliman, Quezon City

BULLETIN OF VACANT POSITIONS

In Compliance with RA 7041

A. **GRAFT INVESTIGATION & PROSECUTION OFFICER II – SG27** (1 position)
  1. **GENERAL INVESTIGATION BUREAU (GIB) – A**
     Item No. OMBA-GIO2-2-2004

Education: Bachelor of Laws; Experience: Four (4) years of experience in the practice of law, counseling, investigation/prosecution of cases, hearings of administrative/criminal cases, legal research or other related works; Training: 24 hours of relevant training; Eligibility: RA 1080 (BAR)

B. **GRAFT INVESTIGATION & PROSECUTION OFFICER I – SG 26** (3 positions)
  1. **PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION & ADMINISTRATIVE ADJUDICATION BUREAU (PIAB) A**
     Item No. OMBA-GIO1-95-1998
  2. **PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION & ADMINISTRATIVE ADJUDICATION BUREAU (PIAB) B**
     Item No. OMBA-GIO1-47-1998
  3. **GENERAL INVESTIGATION BUREAU (GIB) – A**
     Item No. OMBA-GIO1-4-2004

Education: Bachelor of Laws; Experience: Three (3) years of experience in the practice of law, counseling, investigation/prosecution of cases, hearings of administrative/criminal cases, legal research or other related works; Training: 24 hours of relevant training; Eligibility: RA 1080 (BAR)

C. **GRAFT PREVENTION AND CONTROL OFFICER V – SG 24** (2 positions)
  1. **GENERAL INVESTIGATION BUREAU (GIB) – A**
     Item No. OMBA-GPCO5-7-2004 and OMBA-GPCO5-9-2004

Education: Masteral Degree; Experience: Four (4) years in position/s involving management and supervision; Training: 24 hours of training in management and supervision; Eligibility: Career Service (Professional) Second Level Eligibility

Applicants should submit within ten (10) calendar days from the date of this publication to the Human Resource Management Division at the above address, the following requirements.

1) A letter stating the position applied for;
2) Duly accomplished Personal Data Sheet (CSC Form 212);
3) 1" x 1" picture (colored)
4) * Bar/Board Rating or CSC Certificate of Eligibility;
5) * Transcript of Records;
6) * Certificates of Seminars/Training attended;
7) * Service Records or Certificates from previous/present employers stating the positions assumed and corresponding actual duties and responsibilities (if applicable);
8) * Performance Appraisal Reports for the last two rating periods (for current government employees only);
9) Statement duly signed by the applicant as to any relative(s) within the fourth degree of consanguinity or affinity, currently employed with the Office of the Ombudsman.

* Where photocopies are filed, the documents must be certified as true copies by the proper authorities or the applicant may present the originals to the Human Resources Management Officer for comparison with the photocopies.

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE STAFF

Accounting Graduate
Computer literate

For interested applicants, please come for an interview on July 29, anytime between 1 p.m.-5 p.m. at:

CVG Centre, #36 1st Avenue
Cubao, Quezon City
Look for Mae Virtucio

CALL POEA

24-HOUR HOTLINES
722-1144 or 722-1155

JAC FILIPINAS PAWNSHOP, INC.
G/F Ever Gotesco Grand Central Caloocan City will sell all unredeemed pledges for the months of JAN & FEB 2006 on AUG 17, 2006 at 11:00 a.m. J. Lanuza-Auctioneer

(PDI–July 27, 2006)

14th TravelTour Expo 2007

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT YOUR DREAM VACATION choices on Feb. 9, 10 and 11, 2007, as the 14th Travel Tour Expo (TTE), the largest trade and consumer event of the travel industry is slated at the Megatrade Halls of SM Megamall in Mandaluyong City.

TTE '07 brings together local and international travel agencies, tour operators, airline and cruise liners, hotels, resorts, theme parks, travel product suppliers, and tourism promotion organizations in an event that is the ultimate one-stop shop for travelers looking for the dream getaway. Over 60,000 visitors attended this year's event which generated sales of over P200 million to both exhibitors and event sponsors – an exciting opportunity for companies to tap the Pinoy traveler on the look out for the best vacation and travel deals.

With the theme 14th TravelTour Expo: Gateway to Your Dream Vacation, TTE '07 is a venue for exhibitors and sponsors providing information and great discounts on tickets, cruises, and tour packages to various domestic and foreign destinations. For inquiries, contact the PTAA at 5520026-29 or the event manager Fairs & More at 759 6680, email traveltour@fairsandmore.com.ph, or log on to www.ptaatraveltourexpo.com.ph.

Trans Co

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORPORATION
SOUTH LUZON OPERATION & MAINTENANCE
Tel. No.: (02) 5206776; (02) 9814595/9814539/9814576/
9814577/9814578 LOC. 4002; (049) 4114500 LOC. 4002

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
AD NO. TRANSCO 2006-08B

1. The *NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORPORATION, South Luzon Operation and Maintenance* (TRANSCO-SLOM) through the *2006 Corporate Budget approved by the TransCo Board* intends to apply the sum as indicated below being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the following Purchase Requisitions (PR). Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.

DATE OF BIDDING: August 16, 2006 / 9:00 AM

BID SCHEDULE	PR NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	QTY.	APPROVED BUDGET	PRE-BID CONFERENCE
F2	D1-CAV-06-18732	Transformer Bushing, 230KV Transformer Bushing, 115KV	1 pc 1 pc	Php 2,800,000.00 Php 1,800,000.00	Aug. 2 9:00AM
F3	D1-06-18649	Fault Indicator	84 pcs	Php 2,940,000.00	Aug. 2 9:00AM
F5	D1-06-17634 D1-CAV-06-18435	Insulators, Porcelain for 230KV, Tension, 36,000 lbs.	1 lot	Php 9,759,000.00	Aug. 2 9:00AM
F6	D1-06-17634 D1-CAV-06-18435 D30-06-22019 D3O-06-19058	Insulators, Porcelain for 230KV, Suspension, 25,000 lbs.	1 lot	Php13,050,000.00	Aug. 2 9:00AM
F7	D1-06-17629 D1-CAV-06-18435 D3O-06-22019 D3O-06-19058	Insulators, Porcelain for115KV, 69/15,000 lbs.	1 lot	Php11,783,200.00	Aug. 2 9:00AM

2. The *TRANSCO-SLOM* now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for the aforementioned Bid Schedules. Delivery schedule of the GOODS shall be in accordance with the bid documents. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.
4. Interested bidders may obtain further information from the Materials Management Services, TransCo-SLOM and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00 A.M. to 12: NN and 1:00 to 5:00 P.M. from Monday to Friday.
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from July 15, 2006 to August 24, 2006 at the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee in the amount of *Php500.00 minimum, or 0.01% of the ABC whichever is higher per bidding schedule.* The method of payment will be *Cash.* The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized represantative.
6. TransCo-SLOM will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on the date and time stated above at the OAVP Conference Room.
7. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on the date and time stated above. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in any of the forms indicated in Section III Bid Data Sheet of the bid documents, in Philippine Pesos or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency. Late Bids shall not be accepted.
8. Bid opening shall be on the date and time stated above at the OAVP Conference Room. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below.
9. The *National Transmission Corporation-South Luzon Operations and Maintenance* reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

National Transmission Corporation, South Luzon Operation & Maintenance
Engr. Ruben G. Castuera, BAC Chairman
San Vicente, Biñan, Laguna
Telefax No. (632)520-6776
Website : www.transco.ph

(Sgd.) R. G. CASTUERA
Chairman, Bids & Awards Committee

(PDI--July 20 & 27, 2006)

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WATCHES JEWELRY DIAMONDS

BEST OFFER IN TOWN
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WE BUY at HIGH PRICE
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HIS & HERS Watch Center
GoldCrest Bldg.
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5646593 5897041
0917-8473744

WANTED IMMEDIATELY

2 - CUSTOMER SERVICE STAFF

- Female
- 21-26 years old
- Graduate of any business course
- Newly Graduate may apply

Please send comprehensive resumé, records of grades, 2/2x2 ID pictures to:

UP P.O. Box 15 Diliman, Quezon City, 1101

OBITUARIES

You are gone ...
But for us you never left...
God has you in His keeping
We have you in our hearts.

Our Dearly Beloved

RIGOBERTO L. DE SANTOS

Now rests in the infinite warmth
and embrace of our Lord.
He joined our Creator
on the 26th of July, 2006 at the age of 62.

His loving wife **MA. VICTORIA DELA ROSA**; children **MA. NINA TANYA** married to **TORSTEN STRITZKE** and **NOEL**; his brothers, sisters, in-laws, nephews, nieces, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Christ the King Green Meadows Chapels, Green Meadows, Quezon City.

Interment will be announced later.

I am the way, the truth and the life.
No one comes to the Father except through Me.
John 14:6

"I am the Resurrection and the Life, He who believes in Me will live,
even though he dies, and whoever believes in Me will never die.
John 11:25-26

COMMODORE GONZALO M. SANTOS (Ret.)

Former President, National Defense College of the Philippines

Peacefully joined his Creator on July 24, 2006
at the age of 80.

His beloved wife, **ESTER**; children **ERNIE & VIKKI**; **ED & DOLLY**; **LINDA & PETER**; **RICKY & LORIE**; **BENG & EDDY**; and grandchildren **PAOLO**; **KAREL, MICO & CJ**; **PAUL DAVID & ISABELLA**; **CAMILLE, SHANELLE & GABBI**; **CHRISTINA & JONATHAN**; and his sisters **CRESCENCIA, LOURDES & ANGELA** request relatives and friends to join them in prayers for his repose in heaven.

His remains lie in state at the Capilla del Señor, Santuario de San Antonio, Forbes Park, Makati City.

Interment will be at the Libingan Ng Mga Bayani. Date and time to be announced later.

Hon. Mayor Jose "Peping" F. Diaz

Now peacefully rests in the Grace and Goodness of our Lord
on July 25, 2006 at the age of 73.

Mayor, San Mateo, Rizal: June 20, '01 – July 25, '06
Board Member, Province of Rizal: 1995 – 2001
Vice-Mayor, San Mateo, Rizal: 1988 – 1992
Councilor, San Mateo, Rizal: 1971 – 1987

His wife, **Leticia**; children, **Jojo**, **Let**, and **Paeng**; daughter-in-law, **Tina** and grandchildren, **Cullen**, **Denzel**,**Dylan** and **Rafa**; brothers and sisters and their spouses: **Ramona**, **Felicidad**, **Rogel & Tessie**, **Lucing & Dely**, **Amado & Lourdes**, (†) **Ubaldo & Ed**; relatives and friends join in prayer for his eternal repose in heaven.

His remains lie in state at their residence at Ampid I, San Mateo, Rizal until Sunday, 30 July 2006 at 7:00 A.M. and will be brought to the Municipal Hall, San Mateo, Rizal for a short necrological service at 9:00 A.M.

Interment will follow on the same day at the Paraiso Memorial Park after the 3:00 P.M. Requiem Mass at the Diocesan Shrine of Our Lady of Nuestra Señora de Aranzazu.

More CLASSIFIED ADS on pages...

DILG; Isabela Electric; Peza; Victoria's Milling B2
Pag-ibig B3

The Residential Resort at Newport City

The Metro's First [illegible] Residences

Fronting [illegible] Terminal 3, Pasay City

Featuring the newest phase:

SARASOTA

7 ways to enjoy a metro resort lifestyle.

1 Make everyday a red-letter day at the Marriott Hotel.

Turn every day into something special at the Marriott Hotel. Entertain friends in style. Talk business with colleagues in a modern function room. Or simply savor the company of loved ones in a five-star setting.

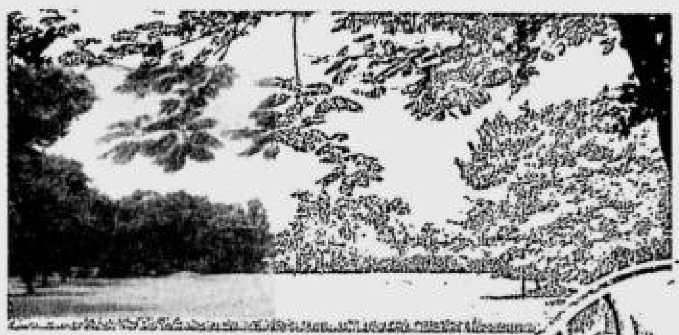
2 Get that vacation feeling at the Villamor Golf Course.

Escape to a championship-level golf haven close to home. At the Villamor golf course, you can tee off at your leisure. Or simply enjoy the sight of 60 hectares of green landscapes, pristine white sand and rows of narra, mango and pine trees.

3 Soothe your body and soul at a sumptuous spa.

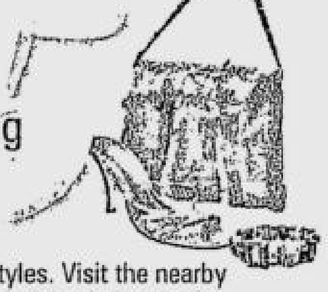
Rejuvenate your senses. At the spa's heat and exercise pools, feel all your stress melt away. Indulge yourself in relaxing treatments at the aromatherapy and massage rooms. And enjoy access to first-class therapeutic facilities.

Marriott
HOTELS & RESORTS



4 Go on a food trip at a hip restaurant row.

Dine on the best of the East and West. Choose from casual and fine-dining places—all a stroll away from home. And delight in alfresco gourmet feasts as you watch live performances.



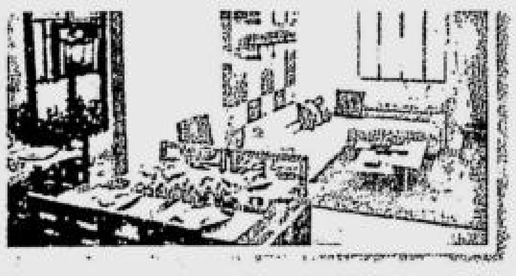
5 Browse the shops brimming with signature fashions.

Keep up with the latest styles. Visit the nearby haute couture stores and indulge in hours of shopping pleasure. Go ahead. Grab, try and buy.

6 Get together with neighbors at the play areas.

Nurture neighborly ties. Lounge with friends at the swimming pool. Work out together at the gym. Hone your game at the badminton and tennis courts or putting green. Or bond with your families at the landscaped gardens and playground.

7 Live close to nature in a 2-bedroom luxury home for as low as P23,000 a month.



Through your wide windows and balcony, welcome sunlight, fresh air and the scent of lavishly landscaped gardens. And take pleasure in a wealth of open-air play amenities literally at your door.

For a taste of the unique resort experience, visit us today at the Newport City Grand Showroom.

Newport City Information Centre, Newport City; Pasay City, Metro Manila, Philippines

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For Announcement Purposes Only

Exclusive Marketing Arm:

Megaworld Newport
Property Holdings, Inc.

Call to readers

WE WANT TO COMPILE A READING LIST THAT we hope will jumpstart the interest of Filipino boys in reading and convert them into readers for life.

E-mail us your pick of the best books, magazines and even comics for boys of all ages. Tell us briefly why you've selected each.

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LIFESTYLE
Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso
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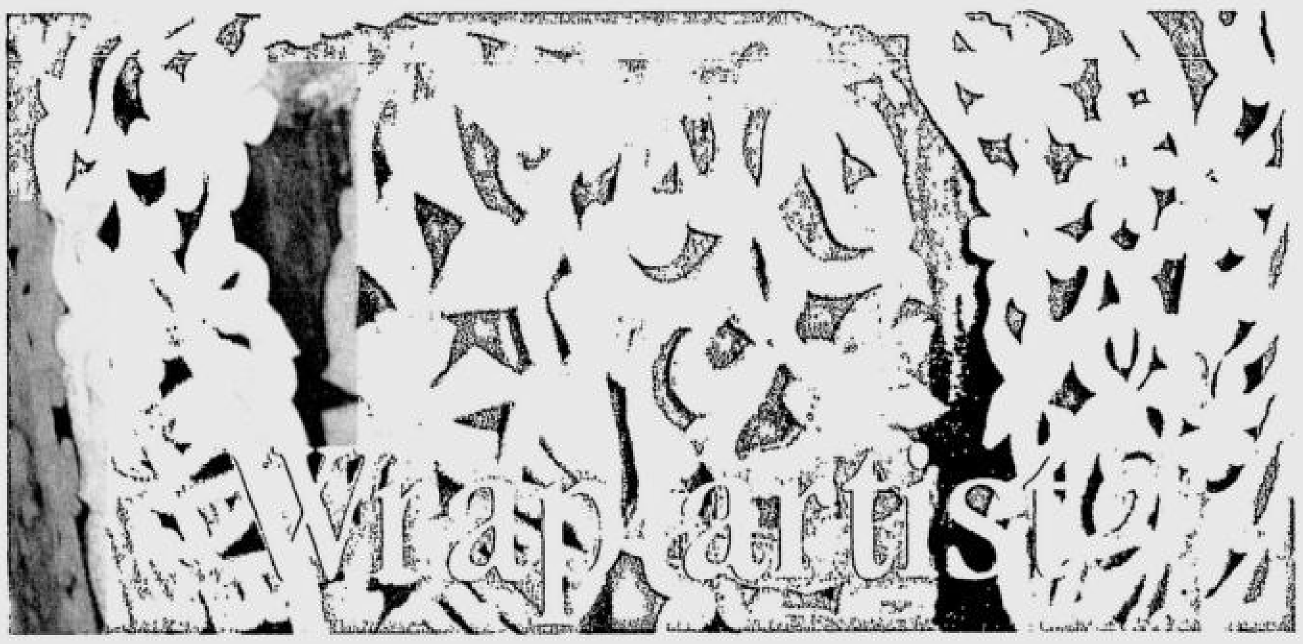
NATIONAL Artist for Art Luz Ocampo

Remember those colorful cutout paper wrappers that the 'pastillas' of your youth came in?



Wrap artist

KITCHEN RESCUE

Reggie Aspiras

DO YOU HAVE A SOURCE for *pastillas* with fancy wrappers just like the ones they used to make in the good old days? Need to bring some to the States.

Loida T.

Yes, Loida, I do! She is Ms Luz Ocampo, who started her hobby at age five. The skill was taught and passed on to her by her mother. Not only does Ms Ocampo make pretty *pastillas* wrappers but she also carves intricate designs on *dayap*, *suha*, *kundol* and *santol*, all of which are bottled and preserved in syrup. They make beautiful presents to give away for a party! She is even a national artist for the arts for hand-cut *pastillas* paper and fruit carving.

I had the chance to sit down and watch her work and my biggest fear is that the craft might soon see its end. According to her, none of her grandchildren took after her, except one who shows a slight interest but not all that much. We must all work to preserve these age-old crafts. It's a pity to enjoy their beauty from mere pages of a book or from images imprinted in our memories.

You must give her a couple of weeks for personalized wrappers. That is, with your name and motif on it. You can even specify the length of the tail you want though the price varies, I think.

Minimum order is 100 pieces. You can just order the *pastillas* paper which is P350 for 100 pieces and P300 for 100 pieces of *pastillas*.

We served the *pastillas* as part of the dessert buffet during my sister Vicky's wedding in the United States and everyone loved them! Catch is you pick them up in Bulacan! Call (044) 7915657.

The bottled *dayap*, if I remember right, I bought for P300. For regular hand-cut wrappers, not personalized, call Bulacan Sweets—7417599. They are P15 apiece, with *pastillas*.

Furnishing my kitchen seems exciting. I am thinking of filling up my spice rack since I just moved to my new house. What herbs and spices must I buy?

Cel Chan

Congratulations! Indeed, furnishing your kitchen is fun. My first question, though, is do you really cook? Or is it *pang porma*? *Pang* effect?

If you want *pang porma*, just buy the regular spices at the grocery stores and get those nice fancy spice bottles I once saw in Gourdo's, Cook's Exchange. Or was it Rustan's?

If you're a serious cook, you might want to look into this new place that sells spices, spices, spices. The cook's dilemma is where to get them all. Fortunately, places have been sprouting all around town to cater to this discriminating set of culinary enthusiasts. One such place is Spices

WRAP/ C3

OCAMPO'S obra: Intricately carved fruit and hand-cut *pastillas* paper

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International Barbecues: July 29 (Sat) 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Jamaican Pork Barbecue - skewered pork strip marinated in Jamaican spice; Classic American Barbecue Shortribs in liquor infused sauce liquor infused sauce; Seafood Satay-mixed saefood in jerky sauce; Moroccan chicken skewers served with tropical fruit salsa. Bonus: 3 Kinds of Asian Sauce. P900.
Snack Meals: July 29 (Sat) 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Flaky Empanada, Garlic Muffins, Chicken Tarts, Meat Buns and Stuffed Pizza. P700.
Sandwich Best Sellers: Aug. 5 (Sat) 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Chicken Clubhouse-cold chicken sandwich served with baked potatoes; Cuban Sandwich-roasted porkloin served with crispy plantain & guacamole dip; Vegetarian Sandwich-mixed veggies with herb dressing and Gyro Sandwich-grilled chicken breast with ranch dressing served with cucumber yogurt salad sidings. P800.
Bartender Basic: Aug. 19 (Sat) 2 - 6 p.m. Basic Tools, Classifications of Wine and Spirits, Types of Bar Glasses and Usage, Mixing, Serving of Popular Cocktail Drinks and Basic Garnishing. Bonus: Special Pulutan recipes. Free Snack. P1,000.
Halal Cooking: Aug. 26 (Sat) 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Chicken Biryani (Steamed Yellow and White Rice with Chicken), Kofta (Stewed Meatballs), Shiesh Kabab (Grilled Barbecue Beef), Carahi Chicken (Chicken Casserole), Qormah (Fragrant Meat) includes Sourcing of Halal ingredients. By Halal Teacher. P900.
Coffee Basic 101 (Barista Course): Aug. 26 (Sat) 2 - 6 p.m. Coverage: Coffee history, coffee process, Trouble shooting, coffee blend, machine know-how-proper grinding. Techniques to perfect froth. Actual preparation of popular Hot Coffee Concoction: Espresso doppio, Cappuccino, Latte, Macchiatto; Cold Coffee Concoction: Millennium Kahlua, Milano mocca & Mocca spin. Strawberry Spin. P1,000.
CERTIFICATE COURSES WITH WORKSHOP (Limited enrollment, pre-registration required)
Basic Culinary: Aug. 1-4 / 15-18 (T-F) 1:30 - 6:30 p.m. Proper hygiene, sanitation & safety; nutrition & nutritional cooking; proper mis-en-place of mirepoix, stocks, soups, sauces, marinades, use of herbs & spices combinations, proper purchasing, storage, techniques of disjointing & boning poultry, filleting fish & meat fabrication. With actual preparation of dishes from appetizer, salad, eggs, pasta, seafoods, poultry & meats, dessert including garnishing for plate presentation. Free Mix & Match cookbook. P5,000.
Fundamentals of Bakery Production: Aug. 8-11 / 22-25 (T-F) 2 - 6 p.m. Baking techniques applicable to the use of various ready mixes, yeast breads, quick breads, pies, cookies & cakes. P4,000.
Free Baking Demo: Aug. 25 (Friday) 4-5 p.m. Baking Business Product application with Maya Mixes, Blackforest, Carrot Cake, Butterscotch Cookies and Waffledog. Includes lecture on Sales & Profit Analysis. Pre-registration required. (Present 3 empty packages of any Maya Hotcake or Cake Mixes)
For inquiries, visit the Maya Kitchen (Tues thru Sat) at 8th floor, Liberty Building, A. Arnaiz Ave. (Pasay Road), Makati City or call tel. 892-1185 or 892-5011 loc. 108; or e-mail us at mkitchen@ultimate.info.com.ph

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SM NORTH Mitch 929-5429
SUBIC Beth/Precy (047)252-6514
TRAFALGAR Emily 814-0138
SKIN CENTER HOTLINES: ALABANG 7750587/09183912510 BINONDO 2420728/09178224399 CALOOCAN 3657653 GREENHILLS 7261526/09194986196 MALATE 5259891/09213173415 MEGAMALL 6377543/09162479753 PASAY RD. 8873530/09156893088 PASIG 6473816/09275341314
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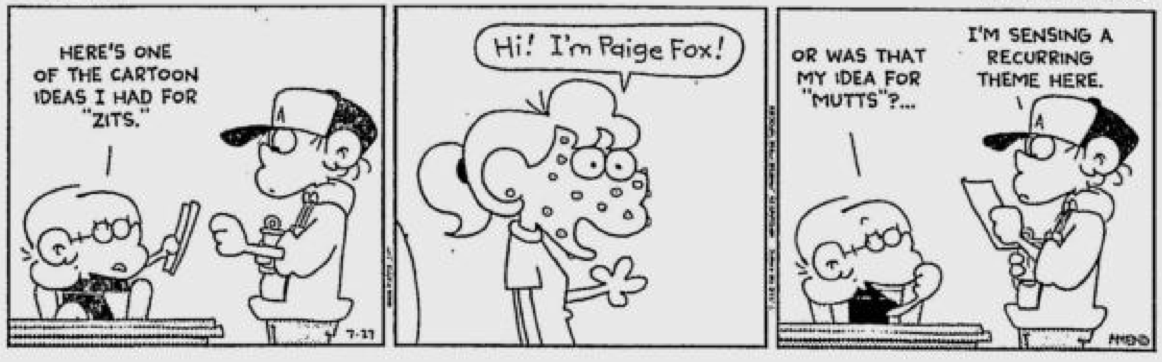
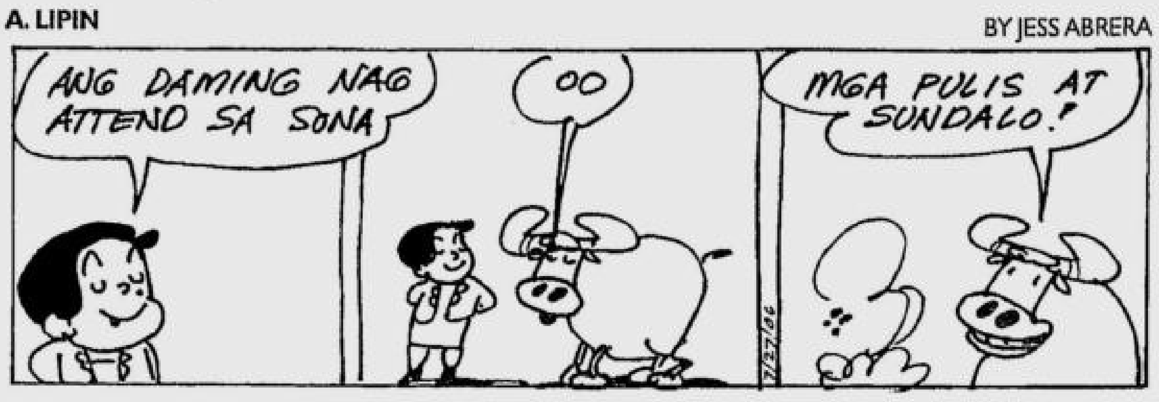
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


HERE'S ONE OF THE CARTOON IDEAS I HAD FOR "ZITS."
Hi! I'm Paige Fox!
OR WAS THAT MY IDEA FOR "MUTTS"?...
I'M SENSING A RECURRING THEME HERE.
7-27
AMEND

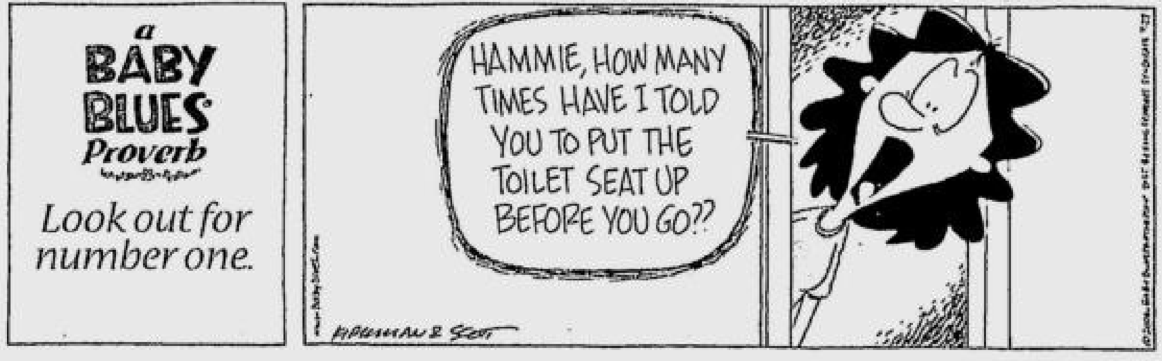
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


ANG DAMING NAG ATTEND SA SONA
OO
MGA PULIS AT SUNDALO!
7/27/06

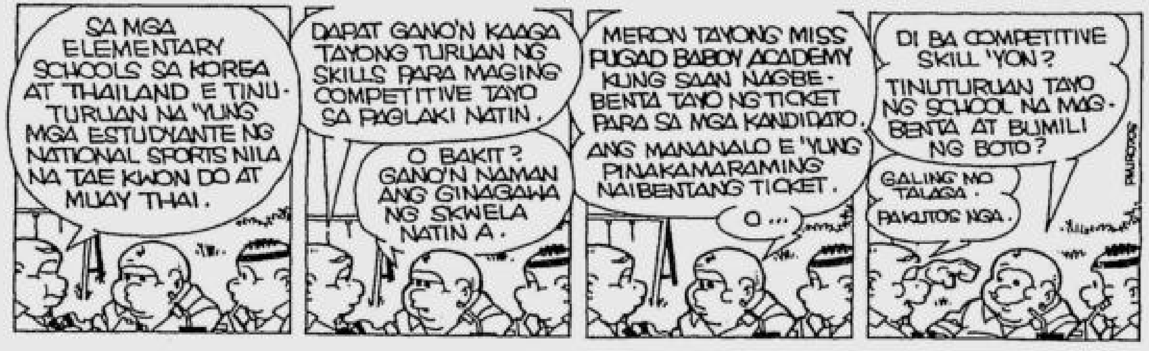
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


a BABY BLUES Proverb
Look out for number one.
HAMMIE, HOW MANY TIMES HAVE I TOLD YOU TO PUT THE TOILET SEAT UP BEFORE YOU GO??
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

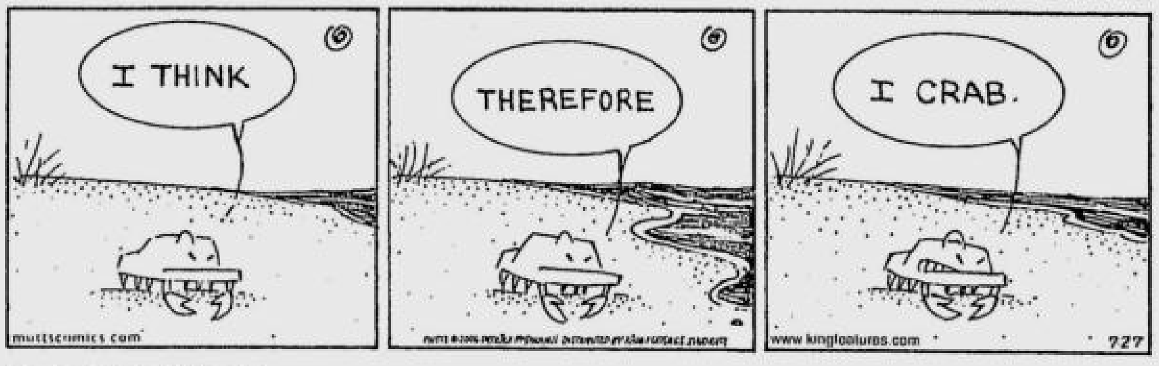
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


SA MGA ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS SA KOREA AT THAILAND E TINUTURUAN NA 'YUNG MGA ESTUDYANTE NG NATIONAL SPORTS NILA NA TAE KWON DO AT MUAY THAI.
DAPAT GANO'N KAAGA TAYONG TURUAN NG SKILLS PARA MAGING COMPETITIVE TAYO SA PAGLAKI NATIN.
O BAKIT? GANO'N NAMAN ANG GINAGAWA NG SKWELA NATIN A.
MERON TAYONG MISS PUGAD BABOY ACADEMY KUNG SAAN NAGBEBENTA TAYO NG TICKET PARA SA MGA KANDIDATO.
ANG MANANALO E 'YUNG PINAKAMARAMING NAIBENTANG TICKET.
O...
DI BA COMPETITIVE SKILL 'YON?
TINUTURUAN TAYO NG SCHOOL NA MAGBENTA AT BUMILI NG BOTO?
GALING MO TALAGA.
PAKUTOS NGA.

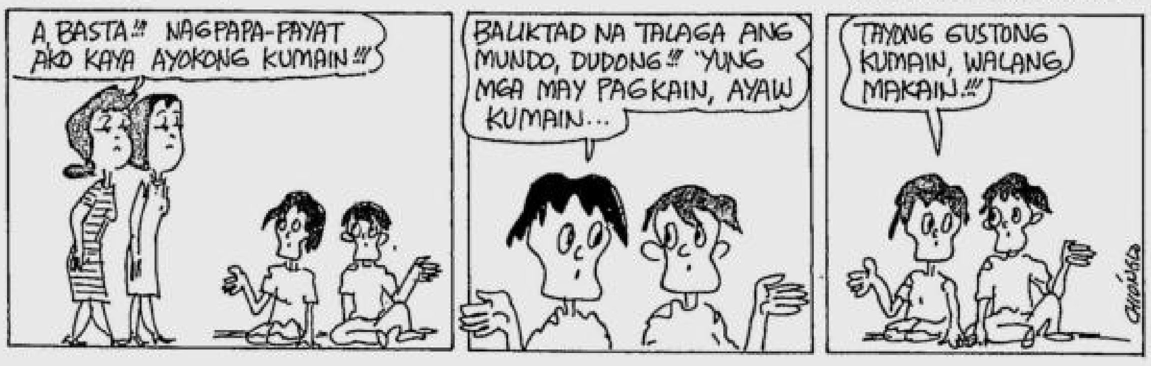
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


I THINK
THEREFORE
I CRAB.
muttscomics.com
www.kingfeatures.com
7-27

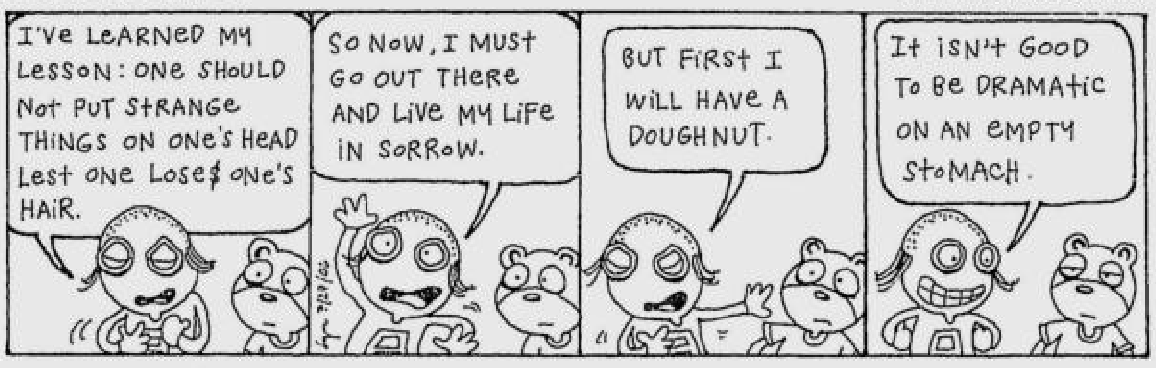
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


A BASTA!!! NAGPAPA-PAYAT AKO KAYA AYOKONG KUMAIN!!!
BALIKTAD NA TALAGA ANG MUNDO, DUDONG!!! 'YUNG MGA MAY PAGKAIN, AYAW KUMAIN...
TAYONG GUSTONG KUMAIN, WALANG MAKAIN!!!
CHIONGLO

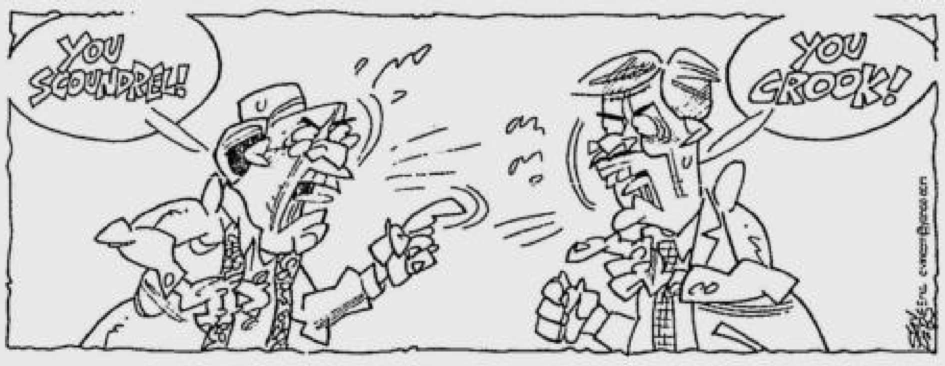
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


I've LeARNeD MY LeSSoN: ONE SHOULD Not PUT StRANGE THINGS ON ONE'S HEAD Lest ONE Lose$ ONE'S HAIR.
So Now, I MUSt Go OUT THERE AND Live MY Life iN SoRRoW.
BUT First I WiLL HAVE A DOUGHNUT.
It isN't GooD To Be DRAMAtic ON AN eMPTY StoMACH.

DIVINE COMEDY

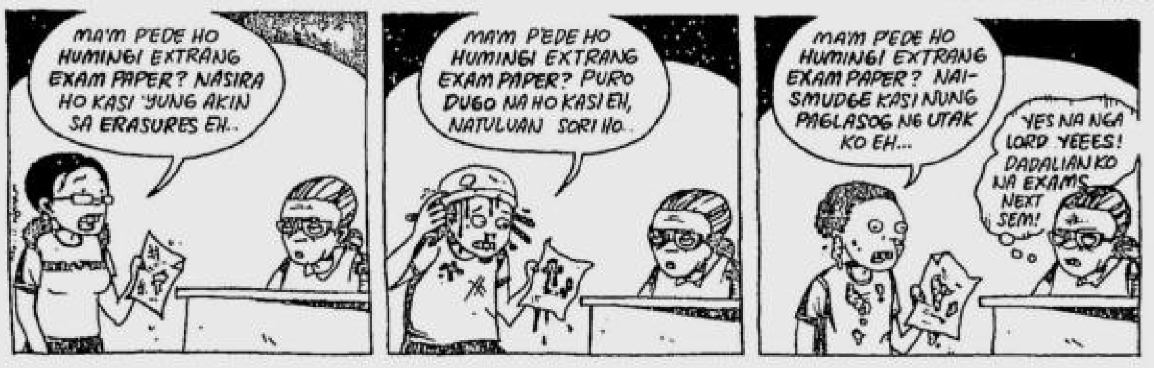
BY STEVEN PABALINAS


YOU SCOUNDREL!!
YOU CROOK!!

THE ONLY TIME POLITICIANS SPEAK THE TRUTH IS WHEN THEY ACCUSE EACH OTHER

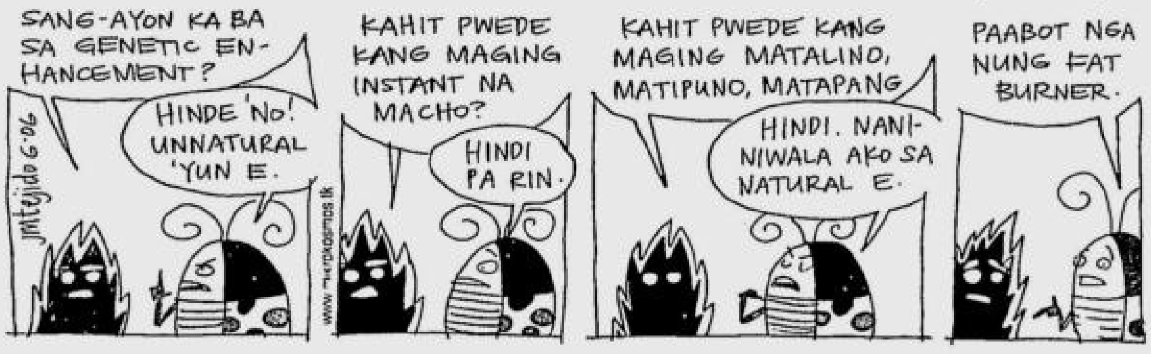
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


MA'M PEDE HO HUMINGI EXTRANG EXAM PAPER? NASIRA HO KASI 'YUNG AKIN SA ERASURES EH..
MA'M PEDE HO HUMINGI EXTRANG EXAM PAPER? PURO DUGO NA HO KASI EH, NATULUAN SORI HO.
MA'M PEDE HO HUMINGI EXTRANG EXAM PAPER? NAI-SMUDGE KASI NUNG PAGLASOG NG UTAK KO EH...
YES NA NGA LORD YEEES! DADALIAN KO NA EXAMS NEXT SEM!

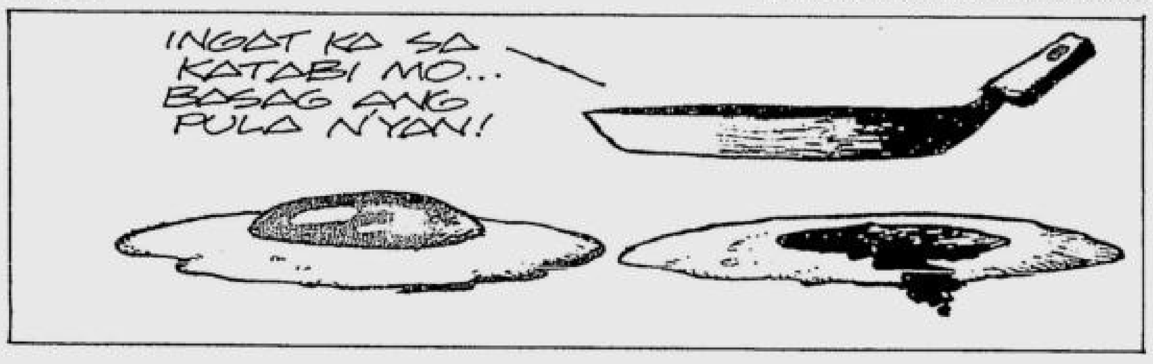
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


SANG-AYON KA BA SA GENETIC ENHANCEMENT?
HINDE 'NO! UNNATURAL 'YUN E.
KAHIT PWEDE KANG MAGING INSTANT NA MACHO?
HINDI PA RIN.
KAHIT PWEDE KANG MAGING MATALINO, MATIPUNO, MATAPANG
HINDI. NANINIWALA AKO SA NATURAL E.
PAABOT NGA NUNG FAT BURNER.
jmtejido 6.'06

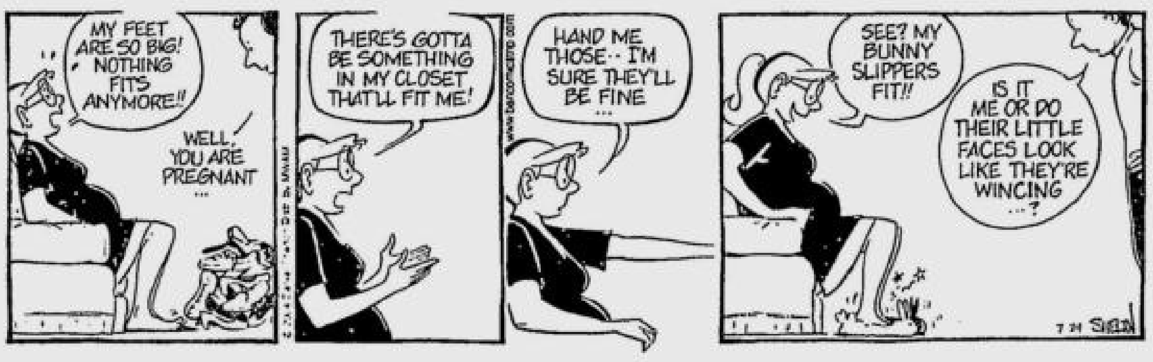
TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


INGAT KA SA KATABI MO... BASAG ANG PULA N'YAN!

BEN

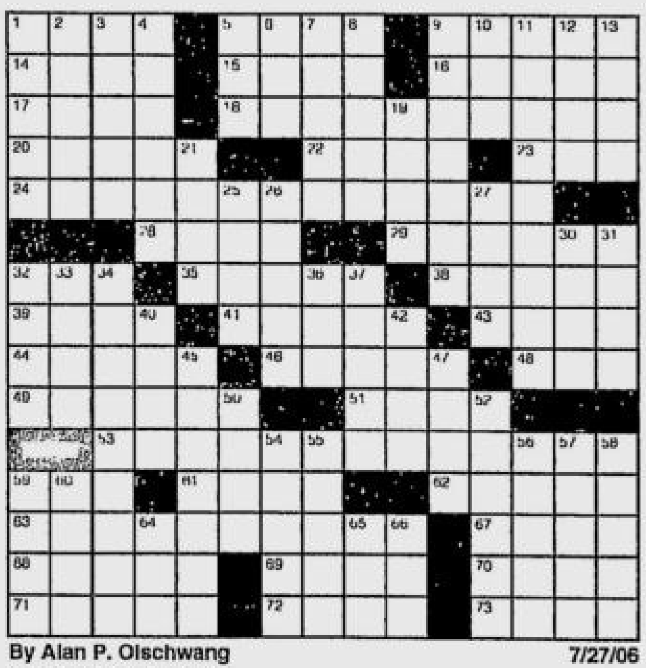
BY DANIEL SHELTON


MY FEET ARE SO BIG! NOTHING FITS ANYMORE!!
WELL, YOU ARE PREGNANT ...
THERE'S GOTTA BE SOMETHING IN MY CLOSET THAT'LL FIT ME!
HAND ME THOSE·· I'M SURE THEY'LL BE FINE ...
SEE? MY BUNNY SLIPPERS FIT!!
IS IT ME OR DO THEIR LITTLE FACES LOOK LIKE THEY'RE WINCING ...?
7-27 SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Not what you think
5 Elec. units
9 Window sections
14 Helper
15 Cafe au __
16 Mob melees
17 Whirl around
18 Start of Kim Hubbard advice
20 Asparagus unit
22 Stable staple
23 __ about time!
24 Part 2 of advice
28 Daredevil Knievel
29 Pitiful depictions
32 Map abbr.
35 Wight and Skye
38 Wave top
39 Sea fliers
41 Before now
43 Toledo's lake
44 Old MacDonald's refrain
46 British peers
48 Carpentry tool
49 Abe of the Supreme Court
51 Hand-me-down
53 Part 3 of advice
59 Stretch the truth
61 Charged lepton
62 Vestige
63 End of advice
67 Author Murdoch
68 Jungian soul
69 Quarry
70 Fender blemish
71 Actor Williamson
72 Tennis units
73 Tense

DOWN
1 Pert
2 River horse
3 So long, Solange
4 "Dennis the __"
5 Still and __
6 __ tai cocktail
7 Turning point
8 Run on the pitcher
9 Matter-of-fact
10 River isle
11 Baseball rarities
12 Coup d'__
13 Mach-2 breakers
19 Footfall
21 Sitarist Shankar
25 Top Untouchable
26 "Kate & __"
27 Bone dry
30 Katmandu's place
31 Leftover dish
32 Coral colony
33 Threesome
34 Vigorous
36 Alfonso's queen
37 Use Brillo
40 Specific location
42 Otherwise
45 Breakfast cereal
47 Transmitted
50 Poker game
52 Scoff at
54 March Madness sport
55 Accustom
56 Made out
57 Hockey infraction
58 Irascible
59 Bank transaction
60 Spanish colony in Africa
64 Med. care plan
65 Wager
66 Cobb and Hardin



By Alan P. Olschwang
Huntington Beach, CA

7/27/06

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

A	G	O	R	A	■	E	M	M	A	■	R	E	A	P
L	A	S	E	S	■	L	E	A	P	■	E	S	S	O
A	S	H	E	S	■	B	O	N	A	■	D	A	I	S
S	H	A	K	E	D	O	W	N	C	R	U	I	S	E
■	■	■	S	T	E	W	■	S	H	I	N	■	■	■
F	E	E	■	S	U	R	E	■	E	N	D	O	W	S
A	T	R	A	■	C	O	L	A	■	S	A	R	A	H
C	H	A	N	G	E	O	F	S	C	E	N	E	R	Y
T	A	T	A	R	■	M	I	S	O	■	T	O	M	E
S	N	O	R	E	D	■	N	O	N	E	■	S	S	R
■	■	■	C	A	I	N	■	C	A	N	S	■	■	■
S	I	G	H	T	S	E	E	I	N	G	T	R	I	P
T	O	R	I	■	M	A	L	A	■	A	R	E	T	E
A	N	I	S	■	A	L	I	T	■	G	E	N	E	T
R	A	N	T	■	L	E	S	E	■	E	W	E	R	S

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7/27/06

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're a natural leader. You make decisions for others. You know how to delegate and arrange work schedules. You quickly see the big picture, and you have an orderly mind. (This is why you don't hesitate to act.) Before the age of 30, you're flamboyant. After age 30, you focus more on your organizational skills. A pleasant, social year awaits you. Enjoy!

Birthdate of: Alex Rodriguez, shortstop; Betty Thomas, director/actress, Jerry Van Dyke, actor.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Don't be too bossy with coworkers today. Your determination and energy to get things done could put somebody else's nose out of joint. (Take it easy.)

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Your creative juices are flowing! This is a good day to make vacation plans. It's also a great day to make the first move if you have a crush on someone. (Somebody's gotta do it.)

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You have lots of energy to reorganize things at home today. Tidy the place up. Get a better idea of what you own and what you want to get rid of. (Stack magazines and mountains of paper into neat piles.)

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): You might try to win an argument today with someone, especially siblings. That's because you identify very strongly with your beliefs today. (Be cool.)

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): You might be excited about buying something for yourself today. It's something you want. It might be something very personal, just for you. (A fun purchase!)

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Today the Moon is in your sign, and it lines up with fiery Mars. This gives you tremendous focused energy to express yourself to everyone you meet.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Secrets might come out today. You could learn something very interesting about someone. (Possibly, the secrets are about you!)

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): A discussion with a female friend will be memorable today. You both feel passionately about something. Don't try to win an argument. Look for a meeting of the minds.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): A boss, parent or teacher will be very clear about what he or she wants today. Listen carefully. Quite likely, you will respond in an equally clear, forceful manner.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): It's OK to be enthusiastic about plans to travel or plans to increase your education in some way. You know that you're going places!

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): You feel territorial about what you own or what you share with others today. That's OK. Sometimes we feel we need to guard our boundaries.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Discussions with partners and close friends might become very emotional today. That's because each party seems to think he or she is right about something. (Is this worth an argument?)

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

by Dave Green

	3		9	4				
2			5					
	9					4		7
	4		3	6				
	5						7	
				8	2		1	
5		1					3	
					7			2
				2	3		5	

Difficulty Level ★★★

7/27

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

9	4	3	2	5	8	6	7	1
2	7	8	1	4	6	3	9	5
6	5	1	7	9	3	4	8	2
4	8	2	5	6	7	1	3	9
7	1	9	3	8	2	5	6	4
5	3	6	4	1	9	7	2	8
8	9	4	6	3	5	2	1	7
3	2	5	8	7	1	9	4	6
1	6	7	9	2	4	8	5	3

Difficulty Level ★★★

Beggar's Chicken that's fit for royalty

HANGZHOUNESE cuisine reflects a passion for good food and appeals to people with discerning taste, as exemplified by its most popular dish, Beggar's Chicken.

THE CUISINE OF HANGZHOU, China's City of Gourmet Food, will be featured Aug. 7-27 at Xin Tian Di Chinese Restaurant of Crowne Plaza Galleria Manila.

Chef Harry Su of Holiday Inn Hangzhou is featured during the three-week Hangzhounese Food Festival. Hangzhou is an important tourist destination for its natural beauty and distinctive cuisine, among others.

The most popular and storied Hangzhounese dish, Beggar's Chicken, will be on chef Su's a la carte lunch and dinner menus. Also on the menu are stir-fried shrimps with *lung ching* tea leaves, West Lake sweet-and-sour fish and Braised Garoupa with fresh lotus root, to name a few.

Shanda Lim, a Chinese singer/theater artist will entertain guests with genuine Chinese musical arrangements Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

Call 6337222 or e-mail mnlcp@ichotels-group.com. Crowne Plaza Galleria Manila, the newest luxury hotel in Ortigas District, is at the corner of Ortigas and ADB Avenues, directly adjacent to Robinson's Shopping Mall. It is a member of the InterContinental Hotels Group.

Xin Tian Di Chinese Restaurant shares the following recipe with our readers.

Beggar's Chicken

1 whole chicken
Sesame oil
Dark soy sauce
1 tsp sugar
Stuffing:
100 g ground pork
100 g dried mushroom
100 g onions
10 g cooking wine
10 g soy sauce
100 g ginger
Shell:
3-5 pcs lotus leaves (for wrapping)
Aluminum foil
500 g flour
4 pcs eggs
Seasoning

1. Rub marinade of equal parts sesame oil and soy sauce, plus 1 tsp sugar, all over the chicken, including the cavity. Leave for at least an hour to allow the chicken to absorb the flavor.

2. Mince the mushrooms and onions. Mix with ground pork, cooking wine, soy sauce and chopped ginger.

3. In a heated pan, stir-fry the stuffing ingredients for 2-3 minutes. Fill up the chicken cavity with the mixture.

4. Wrap the stuffed chicken in cleaned lotus leaves and aluminum foil.

5. In another bowl, beat the eggs and the flour to form dough. Cover the wrapped chicken with the dough.

6. Place the chicken on a shallow roasting pan in a preheated 550°F oven and bake for two hours.

7. Crack the "bread" shell and carefully cut open the lotus leaves and foil. Serve immediately while steaming hot.

PRAWNS with Lung Ching Tea Leaves

GUEST chef Harry Su of Holiday Inn Hangzhou

CHINESE singer Shanda Lim

Wrap artist

From page C1

and Flavors, where one who is in search of spice would feel she/he has found nirvana!

For starters, their shelves are stacked with Gourmet 4 Pepper Blend, Crystallized Ginger, Herby Seasoning, Mama Garlic Seasoning, Lemon Peel Granules, Veggie Pepper, Lemon Pepper, All Seasons Salt, All Natural Sea Salt Coarse and Fine, Braggs Liquid Aminos. They also have olives in every conceivable variant, organic spices and flavorings, plus a grand assortment of teas. So, for those who like sugar and spice, this place is nice! (RR-7 Phase 1B, Street Market, Market! Market!, Fort Bonifacio Global City, Taguig)

What to buy? My suggestion is buy what you need. Only get those that you use often, as herbs and some spices (especially those that are ground) have quite a short shelf life and are best up to six months at most, especially after they have been opened.

I am a public school teacher thinking of ways to augment my income. Please teach me to make *suman*. It will be a great help for me, especially for my monthly expenses!

Ms S. Lopez

May this recipe be a source of your millions, Ms Lopez! All the best to you!

Suman

2 c glutinous rice, local or Thai. (Unfortunately, I like the Thai better. It keeps its shape and I find the bite better—Arranque Market or Lolita's at Farmer's)
1 ½ c water
4 tbsp sugar, optional
½ tsp salt
1 tbsp lye

Wash rice well and drain. Add lye and mix well. Put rice, salt and water in a saucepan. Cover and bring to a boil and lower heat.

Cook until water is absorbed. Add sugar and mix well, then wrap in banana leaves.

Steam for 20 minutes. Serve with fresh mangoes, grated coconut and sugar or this sauce.

Suman sauce

1 c dark brown sugar
½ c coconut milk, 1st extraction
½ c coconut milk, second extraction
¼ c glutinous rice flour

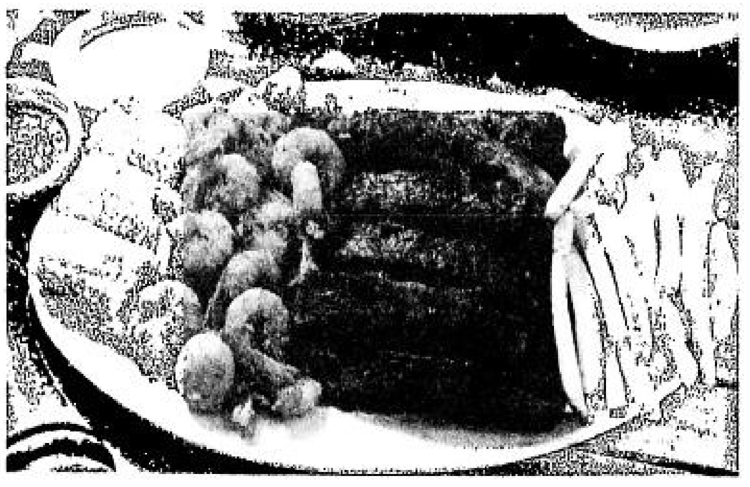
Combine ingredients in a saucepan. Bring to a boil.

On to new discoveries. For all you *brazo* lovers, this is a must-try: Frozen Brazo, also known as Brazo Mantecado, a *brazo* concoction made out of gooey, chewy "yema," layered with ice cream, topped with meringue on a graham crust! Yummy! Call Dimpy Camara (tels. 8178099, 8133477). For the conventional *brazo*, I still think Ms Vargas' is the best! Call 8107529.

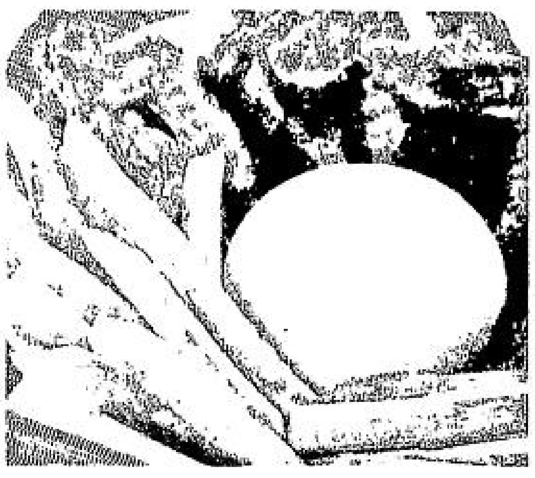
My new class schedules are out. Please call 9289296 or 6335162 for details.

E-mail the author at raspiras@inquirer.com.ph

DINING OUT



BURGOO has opened at the second level of Mall of Asia. It offers new dishes like Fish and Chips, Shrimp Arrabiata, Ultimate Steak and Seafood Combo, Extra Supreme Nachos. Burgoo is open daily, 11 a.m.-2 a.m. Call 9277424, 8981815 to 17, 6875254, 7263578, 9127939 or 5560091.



TIA MARIA'S Buffalo Wings, chicken wings coated with a signature spicy sauce and served baked or fried with ranch dressing. The dish comes with fries and vegetables.

30 ways with oysters

DISCOVER THE 30 WAYS TO ENJOY oysters at the new Oyster & Oysters restaurant at Westgate Alabang. You can have the traditional Steamed Oysters with lemon, Kilawing Talaba, Oysters with Pesto, Oyster Rockefeller, Boursin Oysters, Grilled Oyster Wasabi, Spinach and Four Cheese Oysters. The oysters are flown daily from Iloilo to ensure freshness. Open daily from 11 a.m.-2 a.m., Oyster & Oysters is at Westgate Alabang, Filinvest Corporate City, Alabang, Muntinlupa City. Visit www.westgatefilinvest.com or call 8503516.

SAISAKI offers Bento Meals for only P295. The Japanese complete meal includes a rice, miso soup, sushi and sashimi, noodles and a choice of main dish: *ebi* (shrimp) tempura; Saisaki Steak, *sukiyaki*, *shake* (salmon), *tonkatsu* (fried pork), *yakitori* (grilled chicken), *kani* (crabstick), bacon and beef teriyaki. The Saisaki Bento Box is available in all Saisaki branches: SM Megamall, Glorietta 3, Alabang Towncenter, Edsa, West Avenue, and Padre Faura. Call 5323004 or 5317292.

DINING OUT

HYATT Hotel and Casino's Li Li offers the Tiger Grouper delicacy until Aug. 11. As an additional treat, a group of six or more diners will get a bottle of Li Li's special XO sauce from chef Choi. Call 2451234.

HYATT Regency Manila's Tempura Misono presents real Nippon noodles Aug. 5-19. Call 8331234 loc. 81423.

MANDARIN Oriental's Tin Hau presents "A Gastronomic Rendezvous with Large, Live Shellfish," Aug. 4-17. Available daily in a special a la carte menu for lunch and dinner, dishes include Oysters with Strawberry Champagne Sauce, Green Mussels with Caviar in tomato sauce, Steamed Baby Lobster with Mooi Choy and red-wine sauce, Steamed Sea Clam with Dried Orange Skin in Black Bean Paste, Steamed Coconut Crab with Chinese Herbal and Shao Shing wine, and Flambéed Giant Tiger Prawn in Spicy Beancurd Sauce. Call 7508888 loc. 2422 and 2424.

TEAK Bistro in Power Plant Mall offers Jacky's Favorite, a mixed green salad with pesto sauce over ripe mango and shrimp with fresh chopped tomatoes and sliced green olives, for P380. The restaurant also offers bar chow items, soups, pasta, pizza, main courses (chicken, beef and seafood) and desserts.

BAMBOO Lounge, a new Asian-themed fine-dining restaurant, offers Calamansi Passion Mint Slush. It also serves Chicken Basil with Garlic Sauce, Bamboo Boneless Fried Chicken, Stir-fry Broccoli Flower with Tofu in Garlic, Fish Fillet Curry in Hot Pot. The Bamboo Lounge is at the 2/L, DLA Building, Justicia Drive, between MC Home Depot and Price Smart. Call 8159536.

DENCIO'S is offering "Merienda Specials," combos for only P79. Pair your favorite Pancit Dencio's with lumpiang shanghai, pork barbecue, or *tokwa't baboy*; or have a full plate of the special Pancit Dencio's or Turon de Sorbets. All combos are served with Iced Tea or Lemonade. Promo runs 2-6 p.m. until Sept. 15. Visit www.dencios.biz. Soon to open are Dencio's branches at Robinsons Dasmariñas and Robinsons Starmills.

NEW ORLEANS IN MANILA

GUMBO, a restaurant specializing in New Orleans dishes, has opened at the Mall of Asia. Owned by Well-Loved Seafood Harvest Inc., the opening was attended by celebrities like Janice de Belen and kids, Cj Muere and other Starstruck regulars, Alvin Patrimonio and Philippine Basketball Association players. Ms Philippines Earth 2006 winners assisted Gumbo's managing director Albert Alavera and board chair Tita Rodriguez in cutting the ribbon. Gumbo, open 11 a.m.-2 a.m. daily, is at the 2/L, Music Hall. Call 556023839.

Caterers hold 2-day food fair

THE FOOD CATERERS Association of the Philippines (FCAP) recently held "Taste of Manila '06—Food in Art, Art in Food."

The opening ceremony was held at Tiendesitas, Pasig City, with Steve Tamayo, Boyet Versoza, Nina Marasigan, Al Navarro, Baby Hizon, engineer Alex del Rosario, Irma San Miguel and Danny Jacinto as hosts.

Former First Lady Amelita Ramos led the ribbon-cutting rites. She was assisted by Marikina Vice Mayor Marion Andres, journalist Deedee Siytangco and food columnist Boysie Villavicencio.

Actor John Arcilla was master of ceremonies. The Marikina Dance Guild presented some dance numbers. FCAP president Irma San Miguel gave the welcome remarks.

The exhibit area showcased not just special dishes, but also artistic table presentation and catering setups.

Opening day was capped by various cooking demonstrations and a bridal show by designer Edwin Uy.

"A Catered Affair" focused on the creation of the perfect ambiance for any occasion. Participants were FCAP members, photographers, designers.

The Food Caterer's Association of the Philippines truly stimulated everyone's imagination with their own art of catering.

Don't forget to bring home some 'roscas'

A NEPHEW ONCE WROTE ABOUT THE cooking of *roscas*, a specialty cookie of his grandparents' hometown of Barugo in Leyte.

The late writer Doreen Gamboa Fernandez told me the essay was printed in an English workbook of the Ateneo High School. A search proved futile, however. The workbook is no longer used. Author DJ de los Reyes, SJ, has no copy of both book and essay. This just reinforces for me a computer usage rule—backup, backup, backup!

Over and over

Backup, in the bakery world, is merely baking cookies over and over. It preserves the recipes for generations and seems to make good business also for generations.

Among the oldest is the Panaderia de Molo in Iloilo. For over a century, it has churned out a collection of cookies sold for a long time in rounded tin cans and, later, also in carton boxes.

Its most famous biscuit is the *hojaldres* that comes in very fine and crisp swirls. There are the thin *galletas*, the crisp *biscocho principe*, the sliced smaller version of the *biscocho* called *kinihad*, the rounded *rosquetas*, the long milky *broas*, the white-topped *bañadas* and the *kinomoncil*, so called because it is shaped like the *kamachile* fruit.

El Ideal (pronounced as "el eedjal," said an old timer) in Silay City, Negros Occidental, also has a cabinet full of cookies. Many are similar to those offered at the Panaderia de Molo, not surprising because the two provinces are cousins.

COUNTRY COOKING

Micky Fenix

Slipper cookies

In Cebu, you hear the name Shamrock and you equate it right away with the *otap*. In Bato, Leyte, there is Ada's *galletas* and in Maasin, Southern Leyte, there's Lilith's *salvaro*, longish sweetish *galletas* that people there call *tsinelas*.

There is no big-name bakery that does the *roscas* in either Carigara or Barugo, the two places in Leyte where the *roscas* are being baked. So, when these are sold in Tacloban, there is no brand name on the big plastic container. Small bakeries in both towns do the cookies, some daily, others only on special occasions or when someone orders them to give as gifts or to bring back to wherever a *balikbayan* resides.

But what are *roscas*?

The nearest I can equate them to is basic butter cookie with a bit of anise flavor. The shape distinguishes the cookie. It looks like a chicken leg, that's why my father dubbed it "hita-hita."

After the ingredients are mixed together (*minasa*) to a consistency the baker deems perfect, the dough is shaped on the baking pan like two connected chicken legs. After baking in a wood-fed oven, the pan is brought out then each piece is cut at the middle in a slanted angle.

It is the other saltier version of the *roscas* that I prefer. Called *de caña*, it has a different shape. It's molded into a half oval. But that isn't its final look. After being baked to almost well done, it is halved then its inner part scooped out leaving the outer part shaped like a crescent. Then everything is returned to the oven for toasting.

Before packing, both outer and inner parts are brought together again.

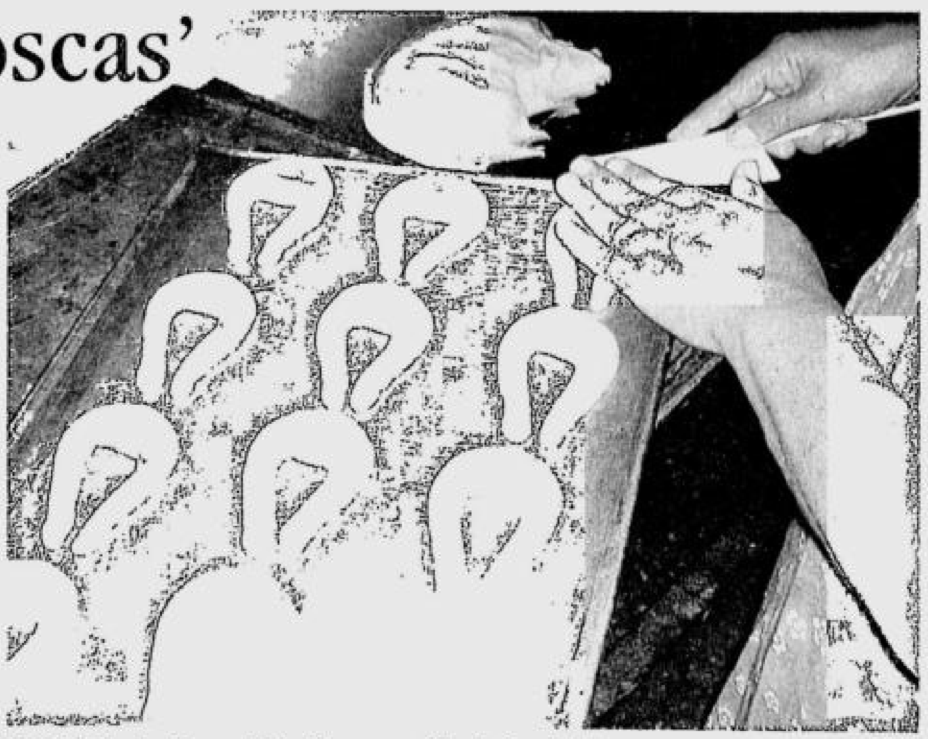
For kids and livestock

My first experience with *roscas* and *de caña* was a week after my wedding when I was asked to feed my newly acquired nephews and nieces those cookies. As soon as I visited the hometown, those cookies were brought out again, this time to feed backyard animals like chickens and pigs.

I did as I was asked, not wanting to anger whatever gods were being appeased.

There are cookies that are used for certain rituals. One of these is the *pan* San Nicolas. It's a shortbread that has the image of San Nicolas de Tolentino stamped on it and was once baked only during the feast of the saint in September. The cookies are brought to the church and blessed then given to children, especially those who are sick.

Watching how the *roscas* and *de caña* were done was not the first time I witnessed cookies being processed in an old-fashioned bakery.



DOUGH being formed into Roscas cookies before baking

Some years back, on a visit to Bohol's Panglao Island, my host brought me to see *broas* or ladyfinger being done. It was in the time of brownouts. The small bakery already had an improvised mixer for the batter, nothing more than a motorized stick that swirled the batter around in a pail. Because there was no electricity, the staff resorted to mixing again by hand. But the oven was still wood-fed.

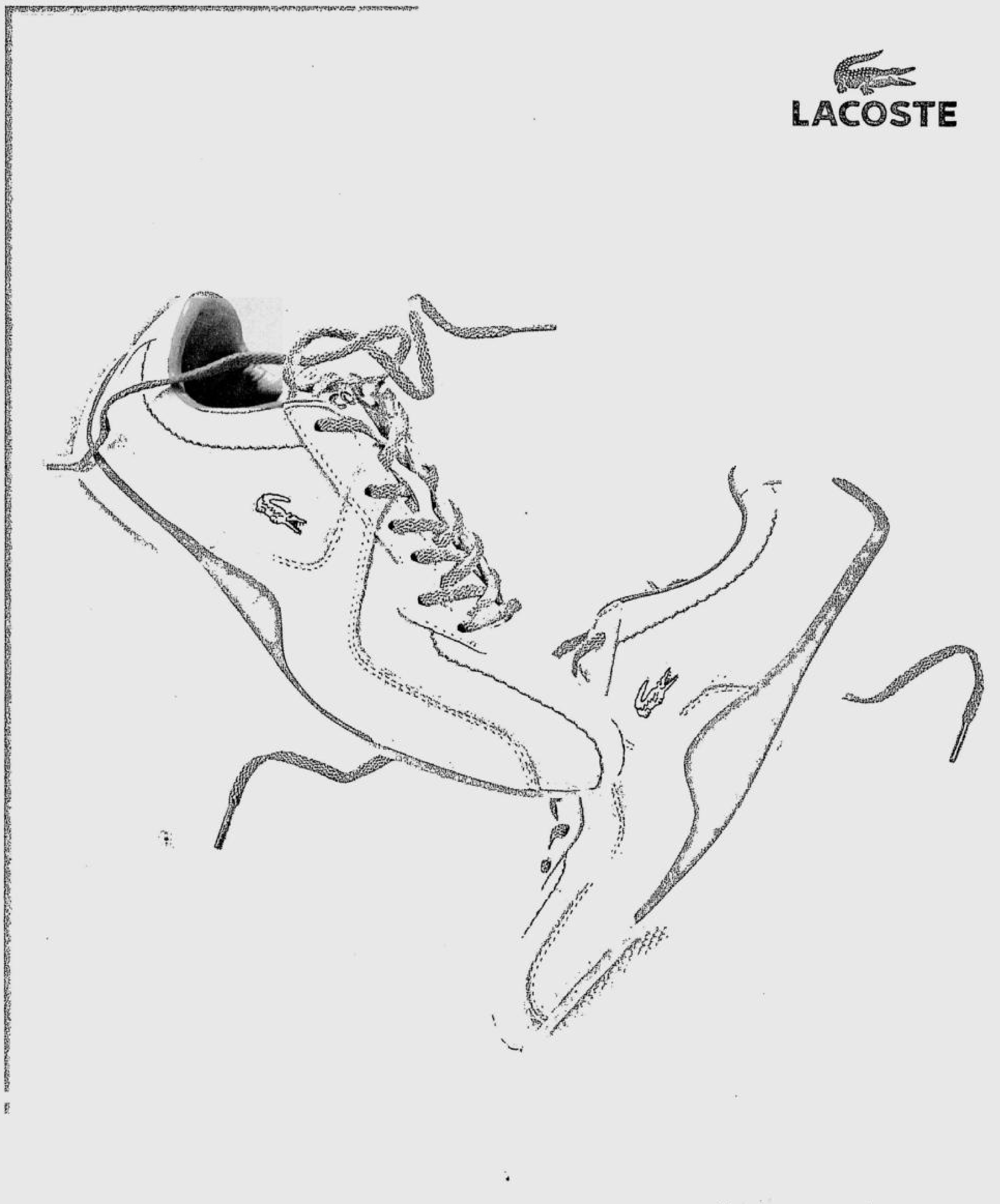
What was new to me was that the *broas* were being toasted on embers. The cookies were laid on a grill made of coconut midribs. The tree of life indeed has many uses.

In the northern part of the country, the *broas* is associated with Quezon cooking, particularly Lucban. Like most cookies, these are what one usually brings home to remind them of places visited.

That reminds me of a sign in Goa, India. It said, "Don't forget to bring home some bebinca." Oh, yes, India also has its *bibingka*. But that's another story.

Maybe we should put up a sign in all towns advertising its specialty the same way. The one in Barugo can read: "Don't forget to bring home some *roscas* and *de caña*."

E-mail author at pinoyfood04@yahoo.com



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• SM Mall of Asia, Tel. No. 556-0479 • SM City Davao, Tel. No. (082) 297-2510 • Ayala Center Cebu, Tel. No. (032) 232-5455

Fancy Pinoy dishes

THE REGGIE ASPIRAS School of Culinary Arts will conduct the following classes:

July 28—My Fancy Pinoy Creations (all new)—Sugar Brined Pork Belly with Kamote and Preserved Kalamansi, Lechon Kawali-style Duck with Ginger Chutney, Lengua con Saba, Kamote Cue Pot Roast, Kalamansi Chicken Barbecue; side dishes; dessert

July 31—Flan (all new)—Savory: Apple Flan with Foie Gras, Vegetable Flan with Scallop Salad, Onion Flan with Veal Schnitzels and Bacon Potato Salad. Sweet: Flan Cake, Flan De Queso, Vanilla Espresso

Aug. 2—Ube (all new)—Cream of Ube and Bacon Soup, Ube Chicken Roast with Ube Rice, Ube Stuffed Roast Turkey with Ube Gnocchi, Roasted Lamb with Ube Mash, Ube Flan. Bonus: Ubeng Jaleya, two kinds

For complete schedule and inquiries, call 9289296, 9273008, 6335162.

New snack

GET A TASTE OF the new Hunt's Snack Pack July 28-30 at Waltermart Makati, Hi-Top Quezon Avenue and Cherry Foodarama Congressional road.

Hunt's Snack Pack is a tasty pudding made from real non-fat milk, making it a healthier snack than chips or candies for the whole family.

It has a higher milk content than yogurt and comes in Swirls Caramel, Milk Chocolate, Choco Marshmallow, Chocolate, Choco Fudge. Fat-free (Choco Fat-Free) and no-sugar varieties are also available.

Hunt's Snack Pack is also available in single-serve cups that come with a spoon.